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## OUR DERBY SWEEPSTAKES.

'Bob!' I shouted.

No answer.

'Bob!'

A rapid crescendo of snores ending in a prolonged gasp.

'Wake up, Bob!'

'What the deuce is the row?' said a very sleepy voice.

'It's nearly breakfast-time,' I explained.

'Bother breakfast-time!' said the rebellious spirit in the bed.

'And here's a letter, Bob,' said I.

'Why on earth couldn't you say so at once? Come on with it,' on which cordial invitation I marched into my brother's room, and perched myself upon the side of his bed.

'Here you are,' said I: 'Indian stamp—Brindisi postmark. Who is it from?'

'Mind your own business, Stumpy,' said my brother, as he pushed back his curly tangled locks, and, after rubbing his eyes, proceeded to break the seal. Now if there is one appellation for which above all others I have a profound contempt, it is this one of 'Stumpy.' Some miserable nurse, impressed by the relative proportions of my round grave face and little mottled legs, had dubbed me with the odious nickname in the days of my childhood. I am not really a bit more stumpy than any other girl of

seventeen. On the present occasion I rose in all the dignity of wrath, and was about to dump my brother on the head with the pillow by way of remonstrance, when a look of interest in his face stopped me.

'Who do you think is coming, Nelly?' he said. 'An old friend of yours.'

'What! from India? Not Jack Hawthorne?'

'Even so,' said Bob. 'Jack is coming back and going to stay with us. He says he will be here almost as soon as his letter. Now don't dance about like that. You'll knock down the guns, or do some damage. Keep quiet like a good girl, and sit down here again.' Bob spoke with all the weight of the two-and-twenty summers which had passed over his towsey head, so I calmed down and settled into my former position.

'Won't it be jolly?' I cried. 'But, Bob, the last time he was here he was a boy, and now he is a man. He won't be the same Jack at all.'

'Well, for that matter,' said Bob, 'you were only a girl then—a nasty little girl with ringlets, while now—'

'What now?' I asked.

Bob seemed actually on the eve of paying me a compliment.

'Well, you haven't got the ringlets, and you are ever so

much bigger, you see, and nastier.'

Brothers are a blessing for one thing. There is no possibility of any young lady getting unreasonably conceited if she be endowed with them.

I think they were all glad at breakfast-time to hear of Jack Hawthorne's promised advent. By 'all' I mean my mother and Elsie and Bob. Our cousin Solomon Barker looked anything but overjoyed when I made the announcement in breathless triumph. I never thought of it before, but perhaps that young man is getting fond of Elsie, and is afraid of a rival; otherwise I don't see why such a simple thing should have caused him to push away his egg, and declare that he had done famously, in an aggressive manner which at once threw doubt upon his proposition. Grace Maberly, Elsie's friend, seemed quietly contented, as is her wont.

As for me, I was in a riotous state of delight. Jack and I had been children together. He was like an elder brother to me until he became a cadet and left us. How often Bob and he had climbed old Brown's apple-trees, while I stood beneath and collected the spoil in my little white pinafore! There was hardly a scrape or adventure which I could remember in which Jack did not figure as a prominent character. But he was 'Lieutenant' Hawthorne now, had been through the Afghan War, and was, as Bob said, 'quite the warrior.' What ever would he look like? Somehow the 'warrior' had conjured up an idea of Jack in full armour with plumes on his head, thirsting for blood, and hewing at somebody with an enormous sword. After doing that sort of thing I was afraid he would never descend to romps

and charades and the other stock amusements of Hatherley House.

Cousin Sol was certainly out of spirits during the next few days. He could be hardly persuaded to make a fourth at lawn-tennis, but showed an extraordinary love of solitude and strong tobacco. We used to come across him in the most unexpected places, in the shrubbery and down by the river, on which occasions, if there was any possibility of avoiding us, he would gaze rigidly into the distance, and utterly ignore feminine shouts and the waving of parasols. It was certainly very rude of him. I got hold of him one evening before dinner, and drawing myself up to my full height of five feet four and a half inches, I proceeded to give him a piece of my mind, a process which Bob characterises as the height of charity, since it consists in my giving away what I am most in need of myself.

Cousin Sol was lounging in a rocking-chair with the *Times* before him, gazing moodily over the top of it into the fire. I ranged up alongside and poured in my broadside.

'We seem to have given you some offence, Mr. Barker,' I remarked, with lofty courtesy.

'What do you mean, Nell?' asked my cousin, looking up at me in surprise. He had a very curious way of looking at me, had cousin Sol.

'You appear to have dropped our acquaintance,' I remarked; and then suddenly descending from my heroics, 'You *are* stupid, Sol! What's been the matter with you?'

'Nothing, Nell. At least, nothing of any consequence. You know my medical examination is in two months, and I am reading for it.'

'O,' said I, in a bristle of indignation, 'if that's it, there's no

more to be said. Of course if you prefer bones to your female relations, it's all right. There are young men who would rather make themselves agreeable than mope in corners and learn how to prod people with knives.' With which epitome of the noble science of surgery I proceeded to straighten some refractory antimacassars with unnecessary violence.

I could see Sol looking with an amused smile at the angry little blue-eyed figure in front of him. 'Don't blow me up, Nell,' he said; 'I have been plucked once, you know. Besides,' looking grave, 'you'll have amusement enough when this—what is his name?—Lientenant Hawthorne comes.'

'Jack won't go and associate with mummies and skeletons, at any rate,' I remarked.

'Do you always call him Jack?' asked the student.

'Of course I do. John sounds so stiff.'

'O, it does, does it?' said my companion doubtfully.

I still had my theory about Elsie running in my head. I thought I might try and set the matter in a more cheerful light. Sol had got up, and was staring out of the open window. I went over to him and glanced up timidly into his usually good-humoured face, which was now looking very dark and discontented. He was a shy man as a rule, but I thought that with a little leading he might be brought to confess.

'You're a jealous old thing,' I remarked.

The young man coloured and looked down at me.

'I know your secret,' said I boldly.

'What secret?' said he, colouring even more.

'Never you mind. I know it. Let me tell you this,' I added,

getting bolder: 'that Jack and Elsie never got on very well. There is far more chance of Jack's falling in love with me. We were always friends.'

If I had stuck the knitting-needle which I held in my hand into cousin Sol he could not have given a greater jump. 'Good heavens!' he said, and I could see his dark eyes staring at me through the twilight. 'Do you really think that it is your sister that I care for?'

'Certainly,' said I stoutly, with a feeling that I was nailing my colours to the mast.

Never did a single word produce such an effect. Cousin Sol wheeled round with a gasp of astonishment, and sprang right out of the window. He always had curious ways of expressing his feelings, but this one struck me as being so entirely original that I was utterly bereft of any idea save that of wonder. I stood staring out into the gathering darkness. Then there appeared looking in at me from the lawn a very much abashed and still rather astonished face. 'It's you I care for, Nell,' said the face, and at once vanished, while I heard the noise of somebody running at the top of his speed down the avenue. He certainly was a most extraordinary young man.

Things went on very much the same at Hatherley House in spite of cousin Sol's characteristic declaration of affection. He never sounded me as to my sentiments in regard to him, nor did he allude to the matter for several days. He evidently thought that he had done all which was needed in such cases. He used to discompose me dreadfully at times, however, by coming and planting himself opposite me, and staring at me with a stony rigidity which was absolutely appalling.

'Don't do that, Sol,' I said to him one day; 'you give me the creeps all over.'

'Why do I give you the creeps, Nelly?' said he. 'Don't you like me?'

'O yes, I like you well enough,' said I. 'I like Lord Nelson, for that matter; but I shouldn't like his monument to come and stare at me by the hour. It makes me feel quite all-overish.'

'What on earth put Lord Nelson into your head?' said my cousin.

'I'm sure I don't know.'

'Do you like me the same way you like Lord Nelson, Nell?'

'Yes,' I said, 'only more.' With which small ray of encouragement poor Sol had to be content, as Elsie and Miss Maberley came rustling into the room and put an end to our *tête-à-tête*.

I certainly did like my cousin. I knew what a simple true nature lay beneath his quiet exterior. The idea of having Sol Barker for a lover, however—Sol, whose very name was synonymous with bashfulness—was too incredible. Why couldn't he fall in love with Grace or with Elsie! They might have known what to do with him; they were older than I, and could encourage him, or snub him, as they thought best. Gracie, however, was carrying on a mild flirtation with my brother Bob, and Elsie seemed utterly unconscious of the whole matter. I have one characteristic recollection of my cousin which I cannot help introducing here, though it has nothing to do with the thread of the narrative. It was on the occasion of his first visit to Hatherley House. The wife of the Rector called one day, and the responsibility of entertaining her rested with Sol and myself. We got on very well at first. Sol was unusually lively and talkative. Unfortunately a hospitable

impulse came upon him; and in spite of many warning nods and winks, he asked the visitor if he might offer her a glass of wine. Now, as ill luck would have it, our supply had just been finished, and though we had written to London, a fresh consignment had not yet arrived. I listened breathlessly for the answer, trusting she would refuse; but to my horror she accepted with alacrity. 'Never mind ringing, Nell,' said Sol, 'I'll act as butler;' and with a confident smile he marched into the little cupboard in which the decanters were usually kept. It was not until he was well in that he suddenly recollected having heard us mention in the morning that there was none in the house. His mental anguish was so great that he spent the remainder of Mrs. Salter's visit in the cupboard, utterly refusing to come out until after her departure. Had there been any possibility of the wine-press having another egress, or leading anywhere, matters would not have been so bad; but I knew that old Mrs. Salter was as well up in the geography of the house as I was myself. She stayed for three-quarters of an hour waiting for Sol's reappearance, and then went away in high dudgeon. 'My dear,' she said, recounting the incident to her husband, and breaking into semi-scriptural language in the violence of her indignation, 'the cupboard seemed to open and swallow him!'

'Jack is coming down by the two o'clock train,' said Bob one morning, coming in to breakfast with a telegram in his hand.

I could see Sol looking at me reproachfully; but that did not prevent me from showing my delight at the intelligence.

'We'll have awful fun when



he comes,' said Bob. 'We'll drag the fish-pond, and have no end of a lark. Won't it be jolly, Sol?'

Sol's opinion of its jollity was evidently too great to be expressed in words; for he gave an inarticulate grunt as answer.

I had a long cogitation on the subject of Jack in the garden that morning. After all, I was becoming a big girl, as Bob had forcibly reminded me. I must be circumspect in my conduct now. A real live man had actually looked upon me with the eyes of love. It was all very well when I was a child to have Jack following me about and kissing me; but I must keep him at a distance now. I remembered how he presented me with a dead fish once which he had taken out of the Hatherley Brook, and how I treasured it up among my most precious possessions, until an insidious odour in the house had caused the mother to send an abusive letter to Mr. Burton, who had pronounced our drainage to be all that could be desired. I must learn to be formal and distant. I pictured our meeting to myself, and went through a rehearsal of it. The holly-bush represented Jack, and I approached it solemnly, made it a stately curtsy, and held out my hand with, 'So glad to see you, Lieutenant Hawthorne!' Elsie came out while I was doing it, but made no remark. I heard her ask Sol at luncheon, however, whether idiocy generally ran in families, or was simply confined to individuals; at which poor Sol blushed furiously, and became utterly incoherent in his attempts at an explanation.

Our farmyard opens upon the avenue about half-way between Hatherley House and the lodge. Sol and I and Mr. Nicholas Cronin, the son of a neighbour-

ing squire, went down there after lunch. This imposing demonstration was for the purpose of quelling a mutiny which had broken out in the henhouse. The earliest tidings of the rising had been conveyed to the House by young Bayliss, son and heir of the henkeeper, and my presence had been urgently requested. Let me remark in parenthesis that fowls were my special department in domestic economy, and that no step was ever taken in their management without my advice and assistance. Old Bayliss hobbled out upon our arrival, and informed us of the full extent of the disturbance. It seems that the crested hen and the Bantam cock had developed such length of wing that they were enabled to fly over into the park; and that the example of these ringleaders had been so contagious, that even such steady old matrons as the bandy-legged Cochin China had developed roving propensities, and pushed their way into forbidden ground. A council of war was held in the yard, and it was unanimously decided that the wings of the recalcitrants must be clipped.

What a scamper we had! By 'we' I mean Mr. Cronin and myself; while cousin Sol hovered about in the background with the scissors, and cheered us on. The two culprits clearly knew that they were wanted; for they rushed under the hayricks and over the coops, until there seemed to be at least half a dozen crested hens and Bantam cocks dodging about in the yard. The other hens were mildly interested in the proceedings, and contented themselves with an occasional derisive cluck, with the exception of the favourite wife of the Bantam, who abused us roundly from the top of the coop. The ducks were the most aggravating por-

tion of the community; for though they had nothing to do with the original disturbance, they took a warm interest in the fugitives, waddling behind them as fast as their little yellow legs would carry them, and getting in the way of the pursuers.

'We have it!' I gasped, as the crested hen was driven into a corner. 'Catch it, Mr. Cronin! O, you've missed it! you've missed it! Get in the way, Sol. O dear, it's coming to me!'

'Well done, Miss Montague!' cried Mr. Cronin, as I seized the wretched fowl by the leg as it fluttered past me, and proceeded to tuck it under my arm to prevent any possibility of escape. 'Let me carry it for you.'

'No, no; I want you to catch the cock. There it goes! There—behind the hayrick. You go to one side, and I'll go to the other.'

'It's going through the gate!' shouted Sol.

'Shoo!' cried I. 'Shoo! O, it's gone!' and we both made a dart into the park in pursuit, tore round the corner into the avenue, and there I found myself face to face with a sunburned young man in a tweed suit, who was lounging along in the direction of the House.

There was no mistaking those laughing gray eyes, though I think if I had never looked at him some instinct would have told me that it was Jack. How could I be dignified with the crested hen tucked under my arm? I tried to pull myself up; but the miserable bird seemed to think that it had found a protector at last, for it began to cluck with redoubled vehemence. I had to give it up in despair, and burst into a laugh, while Jack did the same.

'How are you, Nell?' he said, holding out his hand; and then

in an astonished voice, 'Why, you're not a bit the same as when I saw you last!'

'Well, I hadn't a hen under my arm then,' said I.

'Who would have thought that little Nell would have developed into a woman?' said Jack, still lost in amazement.

'You didn't expect me to develop into a man, did you?' said I in high indignation; and then, suddenly dropping all reserve, 'We're awfully glad you've come, Jack. Never mind going up to the House. Come and help us to catch that Bantam cock.'

'Right you are,' said Jack in his old cheery way, still keeping his eyes firmly fixed upon my countenance. 'Come on!' and away the three of us scampered across the park, with poor Sol aiding and abetting with the scissors and the prisoner in the rear. Jack was a very crumpled-looking visitor by the time he paid his respects to the mother that afternoon, and my dreams of dignity and reserve were scattered to the winds.

We had quite a party at Hatherley House that May. There were Bob, and Sol, and Jack Hawthorne, and Mr. Nicholas Cronin; then there were Miss Maberley, and Elsie, and mother, and myself. On an emergency we could always muster half a dozen visitors from the houses round, so as to have an audience when charades or private theatricals were attempted. Mr. Cronin, an easy-going athletic young Oxford man, proved to be a great acquisition, having wonderful powers of organisation and execution. Jack was not nearly as lively as he used to be, in fact we unanimously accused him of being in love; at which he looked as silly as young men usually do on such occasions,

but did not attempt to deny the soft impeachment.

'What shall we do to-day?' said Bob one morning. 'Can anybody make a suggestion?'

'Drag the pond,' said Mr. Cronin.

'Haven't men enough,' said Bob; 'anything else?'

'We must get up a sweepstakes for the Derby,' remarked Jack.

'O, there's plenty of time for that. It isn't run till the week after next. Anything else?'

'Lawn-tennis,' said Sol dubiously.

'Bother lawn-tennis!'

'You might make a picnic to Hatherley Abbey,' said I.

'Capital!' cried Mr. Cronin.

'The very thing. What do you think, Bob?'

'First class,' said my brother, grasping eagerly at the idea. Picnics are very dear to those who are in the first stage of the tender passion.

'Well, how are we to go, Nell?' asked Elsie.

'I won't go at all,' said I; 'I'd like to awfully, but I have to plant those ferns Sol got me. You had better walk. It is only three miles, and young Baylies can be sent over with the basket of provisions.'

'You'll come, Jack?' said Bob.

Here was another impediment. The Lieutenant had twisted his ankle yesterday. He had not mentioned it to any one at the time; but it was beginning to pain him now.

'Couldn't do it, really,' said Jack. 'Three miles there and three back!'

'Come on. Don't be lazy,' said Bob.

'My dear fellow,' answered the Lieutenant, 'I have had walking enough to last me the rest of my life. If you had seen how that energetic general of ours hustled

me along from Cabul to Candahar, you'd sympathise with me.'

'Leave the veteran alone,' said Mr. Nicholas Cronin.

'Pity the war-worn soldier,' remarked Bob.

'None of your chaff,' said Jack. 'I'll tell you what I'll do,' he added, brightening up. 'You let me have the trap, Bob, and I'll drive over with Nell as soon as she has finished planting her ferns. We can take the basket with us. You'll come, won't you, Nell?'

'All right,' said I. And Bob having given his assent to the arrangement, and everybody being pleased, except Mr. Solomon Barker, who glared with mild malignancy at the soldier, the matter was finally settled, and the whole party proceeded to get ready, and finally departed down the avenue.

It was an extraordinary thing how that ankle improved after the last of the troop had passed round the curve of the hedge. By the time the ferns were planted and the gig got ready Jack was as active and lively as ever he was in his life.

'You seem to have got better very suddenly,' I remarked, as we drove down the narrow winding country lane.

'Yes,' said Jack. 'The fact is, Nell, there never was anything the matter with me. I wanted to have a talk with you.'

'You don't mean to say you would tell a lie in order to have a talk with me?' I remonstrated.

'Forty,' said Jack stoutly.

I was too lost in contemplation of the depths of guile in Jack's nature to make any further remark. I wondered whether Elsie would be flattered or indignant were any one to offer to tell so many lies in her behalf.

'We used to be good friends

when we were children, Nell,' remarked my companion.

'Yes,' said I, looking down at the rug which was thrown over my knees. I was beginning to be quite an experienced young lady by this time, you see, and to understand certain inflections of the masculine voice, which are only to be acquired by practice.

'You don't seem to care for me now as much as you did then,' said Jack.

I was still intensely absorbed in the leopard's skin in front of me.

'Do you know, Nelly,' continued Jack, 'that when I have been camping out in the frozen passes of the Himalayas, when I have seen the hostile array in front of me; in fact,' suddenly dropping into bathos, 'all the time I was in that beastly hole Afghanistan, I used to think of the little girl I had left in England.'

'Indeed!' I murmured.

'Yes,' said Jack, 'I bore the memory of you in my heart, and then when I came back you were a little girl no longer. I found you a beautiful woman, Nelly, and I wondered whether you had forgotten the days that were gone.'

Jack was becoming quite poetical in his enthusiasm. By this time he had left the old bay pony entirely to its own devices, and it was indulging in its chronic propensity of stopping and admiring the view.

'Look here, Nelly,' said Jack, with a gasp like a man who is about to pull the string of his shower-bath, 'one of the things you learn in campaigning is to secure a good thing whenever you see it. Never delay or hesitate, for you never know that some other fellow may not carry it off while you are making up your mind.'

'It's coming now,' I thought in despair, 'and there's no window for Jack to escape by after he has made the plunge.' I had gradually got to associate the ideas of love and jumping out of windows, ever since poor Sol's confession.

'Do you think, Nell,' said Jack, 'that you could ever care for me enough to share my lot for ever? could you ever be my wife, Nell?'

He didn't even jump out of the trap. He sat there beside me, looking at me with his eager gray eyes, while the pony strolled along, cropping the wild flowers on either side of the road. It was quite evident that he intended having an answer. Somehow as I looked down I seemed to see a pale shy face looking in at me from a dark background, and to hear Sol's voice as he declared his love. Poor fellow! he was first in the field at any rate.

'Could you, Nell?' asked Jack once more.

'I like you very much, Jack,' said I, looking up at him nervously; 'but'—how his face changed at that monosyllable!—'I don't think I like you enough for that. Besides, I'm so young, you know. I suppose I ought to be very much complimented and that sort of thing by your offer; but you mustn't think of me in that light any more.'

'You refuse me, then?' said Jack, turning a little white.

'Why don't you go and ask Elsie?' cried I in despair. 'Why should you all come to me?'

'I don't want Elsie,' cried Jack, giving the pony a cut with his whip which rather astonished that easy-going quadruped. 'What do you mean by "all," Nell?'

No answer.

'I see how it is,' said Jack bitterly; 'I've noticed how that cousin of yours has been hanging

round you ever since I have been here. You are engaged to him.'

'No, I'm not,' said I.

'Thank God for that!' responded Jack devoutly. 'There is some hope yet. Perhaps you will come to think better of it in time. Tell me, Nelly, are you fond of that fool of a medical student?'

'He isn't a fool,' said I indignantly, 'and I am quite as fond of him as I shall ever be of you.'

'You might not care for him much and still be that,' said Jack sulkily; and neither of us spoke again until a joint bellow from Bob and Mr. Cronin announced the presence of the rest of the company.

If the picnic was a success, it was entirely due to the exertions of the latter gentleman. Three lovers out of four was an undue proportion, and it took all his convivial powers to make up for the shortcomings of the rest. Bob seemed entirely absorbed in Miss Maberley's charms, poor Elsie was left out in the cold, while my two admirers spent their time in glaring alternately at me and at each other. Mr. Cronin, however, fought gallantly against the depression, making himself agreeable to all, and exploring ruins or drawing corks with equal vehemence and energy.

Cousin Sol was particularly disheartened and out of spirits. He thought, no doubt, that my solitary ride with Jack had been a prearranged thing between us. There was more sorrow than anger in his eyes, however, while Jack, I regret to say, was decidedly ill-tempered. It was this fact which made me choose out my cousin as my companion in the ramble through the woods which succeeded our lunch. Jack had been assuming a provoking air of proprietorship lately, which I was determined to quash once for all.

I felt angry with him, too, for appearing to consider himself ill used at my refusal, and for trying to disparage poor Sol behind his back. I was far from loving either the one or the other, but somehow my girlish ideas of fair play revolted at either of them taking what I considered an unfair advantage. I felt that if Jack had not come I should, in the fulness of time, have ended by accepting my cousin; on the other hand, if it had not been for Sol, I might never have refused Jack. At present I was too fond of them both to favour either. 'How in the world is it to end?' thought I. I must do something decisive one way or the other; or perhaps the best thing would be to wait and see what the future might bring forth.

Sol seemed mildly surprised at my having selected him as my companion, but accepted the offer with a grateful smile. His mind seemed to have been vastly relieved.

'So I haven't lost you yet, Nell,' he murmured, as we branched off among the great tree-trunks and heard the voices of the party growing fainter in the distance.

'Nobody can lose me,' said I, 'for nobody has won me yet. For goodness' sake don't talk about it any more. Why can't you talk like your old self two years ago, and not be so dreadfully sentimental?'

'You'll know why some day, Nell,' said the student reproachfully. 'Wait until you are in love yourself, and you will understand it.'

I gave a little incredulous sniff.

'Sit here, Nell,' said cousin Sol, manœuvring me into a little bank of wild strawberries and mosses, and perching himself upon a stump of a tree beside me. 'Now all I ask you to do is to answer one or two questions,

and I'll never bother you any more.'

I sat resignedly, with my hands in my lap.

'Are you engaged to Lieutenant Hawthorne?'

'No!' said I energetically.

'Are you fonder of him than of me?'

'No, I'm not.'

Sol's thermometer of happiness up to a hundred in the shade at the least.

'Are you fonder of me than of him, Nelly?' in a very tender voice.

'No.'

Thermometer down below zero again.

'Do you mean to say that we are exactly equal in your eyes?'

'Yes.'

'But you must choose between us some time, you know,' said cousin Sol with mild reproach in his voice.

'I do wish you wouldn't bother me so!' I cried, getting angry, as women usually do when they are in the wrong. 'You don't care for me much or you wouldn't plague me. I believe the two of you will drive me mad between you.'

Here there were symptoms of sobs on my part, and utter consternation and defeat among the Barker faction.

'Can't you see how it is, Sol?' said I, laughing through my tears at his woe-begone appearance. 'Suppose you were brought up with two girls and had got to like them both very much, but had never preferred one to the other and never dreamed of marrying either, and then all of a sudden you are told you must choose one, and so make the other very unhappy, you wouldn't find it an easy thing to do, would you?'

'I suppose not,' said the student.

'Then you can't blame me.'

'I don't blame you, Nelly,' he answered, attacking a great purple toadstool with his stick. 'I think you are quite right to be sure of your own mind. It seems to me,' he continued, speaking rather gaspily, but saying his mind like the true English gentleman that he was, 'it seems to me that Hawthorne is an excellent fellow. He has seen more of the world than I have, and always does and says the right thing in the right place, which certainly isn't one of my characteristics. Then he is well born and has good prospects. I think I should be very grateful to you for your hesitation, Nell, and look upon it as a sign of your good-heartedness.'

'We won't talk about it any more,' said I, thinking in my heart what a very much finer fellow he was than the man he was praising. 'Look here, my jacket is all stained with horrid fungi and things. We'd better go after the rest of the party, hadn't we? I wonder where they are by this time?'

It didn't take very long to find that out. At first we heard shouting and laughter coming echoing through the long glades, and then, as we made our way in that direction, we were astonished to meet the usually phlegmatic Elsie careering through the wood at the very top of her speed, her hat off, and her hair streaming in the wind. My first idea was that some frightful catastrophe had occurred—brigands possibly, or a mad dog—and I saw my companion's big hand close round his stick; but on meeting the fugitive it proved to be nothing more tragic than a game of hide-and-seek which the indefatigable Mr. Cronin had organised. What fun we had, crouching and running and dodging among the Hatherley oaks! and how horrified the prim old abbot who planted them



would have been, and the long series of black-coated brethren who have muttered their orisons beneath the welcome shade! Jack refused to play on the excuse of his weak ankle, and lay smoking under a tree in high dudgeon, glaring in a baleful and gloomy fashion at Mr. Solomon Barker; while the latter gentleman entered enthusiastically into the game, and distinguished himself by always getting caught, and never by any possibility catching anybody else.

Poor Jack! He was certainly unfortunate that day. Even an accepted lover would have been rather put out, I think, by an incident which occurred during our return home. It was agreed that all of us should walk, as the trap had been already sent off with the empty basket, so we started down Thorny Lane and through the fields. We were just getting over a stile to cross old Brown's ten-acre lot, when Mr. Cronin pulled up, and remarked that he thought we had better get into the road.

'Road?' said Jack. 'Nonsense! We save a quarter of a mile by the field.'

'Yes, but it's rather dangerous. We'd better go round.'

'Where's the danger?' said our military man, contemptuously twisting his moustache.

'O, nothing,' said Cronin. 'That quadruped in the middle of the field is a bull, and not a very good-tempered one either. That's all. I don't think that the ladies should be allowed to go.'

'We won't go,' said the ladies in chorus.

'Then come round by the hedge and get into the road,' suggested Sol.

'You may go as you like,' said Jack rather testily; 'but I am going across the field.'

'Don't be a fool, Jack,' said my brother.

'You fellows may think it right to turn tail at an old cow, but I don't. It hurts my self-respect, you see, so I shall join you at the other side of the farm.' With which speech Jack buttoned up his coat in a truculent manner, waved his cane jauntily, and swaggered off into the ten-acre lot.

We clustered about the stile and watched the proceedings with anxiety. Jack tried to look as if he were entirely absorbed in the view and in the probable state of the weather, for he gazed about him and up into the clouds in an abstracted manner. His gaze generally began and ended, however, somewhere in the direction of the bull. That animal, after regarding the intruder with a prolonged stare, had retreated into the shadow of the hedge at one side, while Jack was walking up the long axis of the field.

'It's all right,' said I. 'It's got out of his way.'

'I think it's leading him on,' said Mr. Nicholas Cronin. 'It's a vicious cunning brute.'

Mr. Cronin had hardly spoken before the bull emerged from the hedge, and began pawing the ground, and tossing its wicked black head in the air. Jack was in the middle of the field by this time, and affected to take no notice of his companion, though he quickened his pace slightly. The bull's next manoeuvre was to run rapidly round in two or three small circles; and then it suddenly stopped, bellowed, put down its head, elevated its tail, and made for Jack at the very top of its speed.

There was no use pretending to ignore its existence any longer. Jack faced round and gazed at it for a moment. He had only his

little cane in his hand to oppose to the half ton of irate beef which was charging towards him. He did the only thing that was possible, namely to make for the hedge at the other side of the field.

At first Jack hardly condescended to run, but went off with a languid contemptuous trot, a sort of compromise between his dignity and his fear, which was so ludicrous that, frightened as we were, we burst into a chorus of laughter. By degrees, however, as he heard the galloping of hoofs sounding nearer and nearer, he quickened his pace, until ultimately he was in full flight for shelter, with his hat gone and his coat-tails fluttering in the breeze, while his pursuer was not ten yards behind him. If all Ayoub Khan's cavalry had been in his rear, our Afghan hero could not have done the distance in a shorter time. Quickly as he went, the bull went quicker still, and the two seemed to gain the hedge almost at the same moment. We saw Jack spring boldly into it, and the next moment he came flying out at the other side as if he had been discharged from a cannon, while the bull indulged in a series of triumphant bellows through the hole which he had made. It was a relief to us all to see Jack gather himself up and start off for home without a glance in our direction. He had retired to his room by the time we arrived, and did not appear until breakfast next morning, when he limped in with a very crestfallen expression. None of us was hard-hearted enough to allude to the subject, however, and by judicious treatment we restored him before lunch-time to his usual state of equanimity.

It was a couple of days after the picnic that our great Derby

sweepstakes was to come off. This was an annual ceremony never omitted at Hatherley House, where, between visitors and neighbours, there were generally quite as many candidates for tickets as there were horses entered.

'The sweepstakes, ladies and gentlemen, comes off to-night,' said Bob in his character of head of the house. 'The subscription is ten shillings. Second gets quarter of the pool, and third has his money returned. No one is allowed to have more than one ticket, or to sell his ticket after drawing it. The drawing will be at seven thirty.' All of which Bob delivered in a very pompous and official voice, though the effect was rather impaired by a sonorous 'Amen!' from Mr. Nicholas Cronin.

I must now drop the personal style of narrative for a time. Hitherto my little story has consisted simply in a series of extracts from my own private journal; but now I have to tell of a scene which only came to my ears after many months.

Lieutenant Hawthorne, or Jack, as I cannot help calling him, had been very quiet since the day of the picnic, and given himself up to reverie. Now, as luck would have it, Mr. Solomon Barker sauntered into the smoking-room after luncheon on the day of the sweepstakes, and found the Lieutenant puffing moodily in solitary grandeur upon one of the settees. It would have seemed cowardly to retreat, so the student sat down in silence, and began turning over the pages of the *Graphic*. Both the rivals felt the situation to be an awkward one. They had been in the habit of studiously avoiding each other's society, and now they found themselves thrown together suddenly, with no third

person to act as a buffer. The silence began to be oppressive. The Lieutenant yawned and coughed with over-acted nonchalance, while honest Sol felt very hot and uncomfortable, and continued to stare gloomily at the paper in his hand. The ticking of the clock, and the click of the billiard-balls across the passage, seemed to grow unendurably loud and monotonous. Sol glanced across once; but catching his companion's eye in an exactly similar action, the two young men seemed simultaneously to take a deep and all-absorbing interest in the pattern of the cornice.

'Why should I quarrel with him?' thought Sol to himself. 'After all, I want nothing but fair play. Probably I shall be snubbed; but I may as well give him an opening.'

Sol's cigar had gone out; the opportunity was too good to be neglected.

'Could you oblige me with a fusee, Lieutenant?' he asked.

The Lieutenant was sorry—extremely sorry—but he was not in possession of a fusee.

This was a bad beginning. Chilly politeness was even more repulsing than absolute rudeness. But Mr. Solomon Barker, like many other shy men, was audacity itself when the ice had once been broken. He would have no more bickerings or misunderstandings. Now was the time to come to some definite arrangement. He pulled his armchair across the room, and planted himself in front of the astonished soldier.

'You're in love with Miss Nelly Montague,' he remarked.

Jack sprang off the settee with as much rapidity as if Farmer Brown's bull were coming in through the window.

'And if I am, sir,' he said, twist-

ing his tawny moustache, 'what the devil is that to you?'

'Don't lose your temper,' said Sol. 'Sit down again, and talk the matter over like a reasonable Christian. I am in love with her too.'

'What the deuce is the fellow driving at?' thought Jack, as he resumed his seat, still simmering after his recent explosion.

'So the long and the short of it is that we are both in love with her,' continued Sol, emphasising his remarks with his bony forefinger.

'What then?' said the Lieutenant, showing some symptoms of a relapse. 'I suppose that the best man will win, and that the young lady is quite able to choose for herself. You don't expect me to stand out of the race just because you happen to want the prize, do you?'

'That's just it,' cried Sol. 'One of us will have to stand out. You've hit the right idea there. You see, Nelly—Miss Montague, I mean—is, as far as I can see, rather fonder of you than of me, but still fond enough of me not to wish to grieve me by a positive refusal.'

'Honesty compels me to state,' said Jack, in a more conciliatory voice than he had made use of hitherto, 'that Nelly—Miss Montague, I mean—is rather fonder of you than of me; but still, as you say, fond enough of me not to prefer my rival openly in my presence.'

'I don't think you're right,' said the student. 'In fact I know you are not; for she told me as much with her own lips. However, what you say makes it easier for us to come to an understanding. It is quite evident that as long as we show ourselves to be equally fond of her, neither of us can have the slightest hope of winning her.'

'There's some sense in that,' said the Lieutenant reflectively; 'but what do you propose?'

'I propose that one of us stand out, to use your own expression. There is no alternative.'

'But who is to stand out?' asked Jack.

'Ah, that is the question.'

'I can claim to having known her longest.'

'I can claim to having loved her first.'

Matters seemed to have come to a deadlock. Neither of the young men was in the least inclined to abdicate in favour of his rival.

'Look here,' said the student, 'let us decide the matter by lot.'

This seemed fair, and was agreed to by both. A new difficulty arose, however. Both of them felt sentimental objections towards risking their angel upon such a paltry chance as the turn of a coin or the length of a straw. It was at this crisis that an inspiration came upon Lieutenant Hawthorne.

'I'll tell you how we will decide it,' he said. 'You and I are both entered for our Derby sweepstakes. If your horse beats mine, I give up my chance; if mine beats yours, you leave Miss Montague for ever. Is it a bargain?'

'I have only one stipulation to make,' said Sol. 'It is ten days yet before the race will be run. During that time neither of us must attempt to take an unfair advantage of the other. We shall both agree not to press our suit until the matter is decided.'

'Done!' said the soldier.

'Done!' said Solomon.

And they shook hands upon the agreement.

I had, as I have already observed, no knowledge of the con-

versation which had taken place between my suitors. I may mention incidentally that during the course of it I was in the library, listening to Tennyson, read aloud in the deep musical voice of Mr. Nicholas Cronin. I observed, however, in the evening that these two young men seemed remarkably excited about their horses, and that neither of them was in the least inclined to make himself agreeable to me, for which crime I am happy to say that they were both punished by drawing rank outsiders. Eurydice, I think, was the name of Sol's; while Jack's was Bicycle. Mr. Cronin drew an American horse named Iroquois, and all the others seemed fairly well pleased. I peeped into the smoking-room before going to bed, and was amused to see Jack consulting the sporting prophet of the *Field*, while Sol was deeply immersed in the *Gazette*. This sudden mania for the Turf seemed all the more strange, since I knew that if my cousin could distinguish a horse from a cow, it was as much as any of his friends would give him credit for.

The ten succeeding days were voted very slow by various members of the household. I cannot say that I found them so. Perhaps that was because I discovered something very unexpected and pleasing in the course of that period. It was a relief to be free of any fear of wounding the susceptibilities of either of my former lovers. I could say what I chose and do what I liked now; for they had deserted me completely, and handed me over to the society of my brother Bob and Mr. Nicholas Cronin. The new excitement of horse-racing seemed to have driven their former passion completely out of their minds. Never was a house

so deluged with special tips and every vile print which could by any possibility have a word bearing upon the training of the horses or their antecedents. The very grooms in the stable were tired of recounting how Bicycle was descended from Velocipede, or explaining to the anxious medical student how Eurydice was by Orpheus out of Hades. One of them discovered that her maternal grandmother had come in third for the Ebor Handicap; but the curious way in which he stuck the half crown which he received into his left eye, while he winked at the coachman with his right, throws some doubt upon the veracity of his statement. As he remarked in a beery whisper that evening, 'The bloke 'll never know the differ, and it's worth 'arf a dollar for him to think as it's true.'

As the day drew nearer the excitement increased. Mr. Cronin and I used to glance across at each other and smile as Jack and Sol precipitated themselves upon the papers at breakfast, and devoured the list of the betting. But matters culminated upon the evening immediately preceding the race. The Lieutenant had run down to the station to secure the latest intelligence, and now he came rushing in, waving a crushed paper frantically over his head.

'Eurydice is scratched!' he yelled. 'Your horse is done for, Barker!'

'What?' roared Sol.

'Done for—utterly broken down in training—won't run at all!'

'Let me see,' groaned my cousin, seizing the paper; and then, dropping it, he rushed out of the room, and banged down the stairs, taking four at a time. We saw no more of him until late at night, when he slunk in, looking very

dishevelled, and crept quietly off to his room. Poor fellow, I should have condoled with him had it not been for his recent disloyal conduct towards myself.

Jack seemed a changed man from that moment. He began at once to pay me marked attention, very much to the annoyance of myself and of some one else in the room. He played and sang and proposed round games, and, in fact, quite usurped the rôle usually played by Mr. Nicholas Cronin.

I remember that it struck me as remarkable that on the morning of the Derby-day the Lieutenant should have entirely lost his interest in the race. He was in the greatest spirits at breakfast, but did not even open the paper in front of him. It was Mr. Cronin who unfolded it at last and glanced over its columns.

'What's the news, Nick?' asked my brother Bob.

'Nothing much. O yes, here's something. Another railway accident. Collision apparently. Westinghouse brake gone wrong. Two killed, seven hurt, and—by Jove! listen to this: "Among the victims was one of the competitors in the equine Olympiad of to-day. A sharp splinter had penetrated its side, and the valuable animal had to be sacrificed upon the shrine of humanity. The name of the horse is Bicycle." Hullo, you've gone and spilt your coffee all over the cloth, Hawthorne! Ah, I forgot, Bicycle was your horse, wasn't it? Your chance is gone, I am afraid. I see that Iroquois, who started low, has come to be first favourite now.'

Ominous words, reader, as no doubt your nice discernment has taught you during, at the least, the last three columns. Don't call me a flirt and a coquette until

you have weighed the facts. Consider my pique at the sudden desertion of my admirers, think of my delight at the confession from a man whom I had tried to conceal from myself even that I loved, think of the opportunities which he enjoyed during the time that Jack and Sol were systematically avoiding me, in accordance with their ridiculous agreement. Weigh all this, and then which among you will throw the first stone at the blushing little prize of the Derby Sweep?

Here it is as it appeared at the end of three short months in the *Morning Post*: 'August 12th.—At Hatherley Church, Nicholas Cronin, Esq., eldest son of Nicholas Cronin, Esq., of the Woodlands, Cropshire, to Miss Eleanor Montague, daughter of the late James Montague, Esq., J.P., of Hatherley House.'

Jack set off with the declared intention of volunteering for a ballooning expedition to the North Pole. He came back, however, in three days, and said that he had changed his mind, but intended to walk in Stanley's footsteps across Equatorial Africa.

Since then he has dropped one or two gloomy allusions to forlorn hopes and the unutterable joys of death; but on the whole he is coming round very nicely, and has been heard to grumble of late on such occasions as the under-doing of the mutton and the over-doing of the beef, which may be fairly set down as a very healthy symptom.

Sol took it more quietly, but I fear the iron went deeper into his soul. However, he pulled himself together like a dear brave fellow as he is, and actually had the hardihood to propose the bridesmaids, on which occasion he became inextricably mixed up in a labyrinth of words. He washed his hands of the mutinous sentence, however, and resumed his seat in the middle of it, overwhelmed with blushes and applause. I hear that he has confided his woes and his disappointments to Grace Maberley's sister, and met with the sympathy which he expected. Bob and Gracie are to be married in a few months, so possibly there may be another wedding about that time.

A. CONAN DOYLE, M.D.

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## FORTUNES MADE IN BUSINESS.

### XXVI.

SIR JOHN BROWN.

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'JOHN BROWN!' The name is not entirely undistinguished in the annals of remarkable men, nor has it been unhonoured of the lyric Muse; but it requires, notwithstanding, an effort of the imagination to lift it out of the dull inglorious company of Smith, Jones, and Robinson. Upon a young man of humble antecedents just awakening to the serious side of life, and about to weigh his chances of making a mark in the world, it may easily be understood to produce a certain depression, to convey to him a discouraging premonition of failure, a chafing consciousness that another grim janitor was added to

'Those twin gaoles of the daring heart—  
Low birth and iron fortune.'

Charles Kean indicated the other extreme when he said that his father was the greatest enemy of his life. The eminent Edmund set the name of Kean high in the bead-roll of genius, and left his son the hopeless task of sustaining it at the high-water mark. It may be a whimsical extravagance to suppose that the subject of this paper was hampered by the unheroic traditions of his patronymic, but remembering how much there is (or is not) in a name, we may fairly assume that one of his minor tasks was to prove that the name of Brown was not necessarily the brand of mediocrity. What might be a purely imaginary difficulty to-day when every lad is sent forth into

the fray armed *cap-à-pie* with all the weapons he requires save those which nature gives him, was often a substantial hindrance when Sir John Brown made his bow to the commercial world. At all events, the youth who fought his way to a place amid the galaxy of industrial knights whose honours are the harvest of one generation—Sir Josiah Mason, Sir Henry Bessemer, Sir Titus Salt, Sir Joseph Whitworth, Sir William Armstrong among the number—took up the gauntlet which Fortune had thrown down to him under a social system which made the competition between even a rich dunce and a poor genius a cruelly unequal match. Young John Brown was poor. Whether we may claim for him the attribute of genius must be gathered from the narrative of the success which he achieved and the way in which he achieved it. Carlyle defines genius as an infinite capacity for taking pains, and that infinite capacity, at least, was the birthright of John Brown. To his common name he united uncommon powers and uncommon qualities; and in the story which traces the gradual mastery of the innate strength over the external barriers the sentimental reader will not fail to detect a strand of romance which imparts a poetical charm to even a tale of steel, and which may prevent the iron from entering into his soul too deeply.

The history of Sir John Brown's career runs parallel with the in-

dustrial history of modern Sheffield. Fifty years ago Sheffield had not earned its distinction as the first smoke-producing town in the kingdom. Those casual critics who twit Hallamshire people with the dirty density of their atmosphere and flatter themselves that there is a sting in the taunt may deceive themselves. Even Charles Reade's desperately insulting allusion to 'this infernal city, whose water is blacking and whose air is coal,' diverted rather than annoyed the true-born Sheffielder. The patriotic Londoner who feels called upon to undertake the melancholy task of defending his indefensible fog has no idea of the contempt of Steelopolis for the horror which strangers affect at sight of what the author of the wondrous 'Hillsborough' romance again calls the 'acres of crape' which are supposed to make the place the abode of despair. An ex-master cutler lately spoke in tearful tones of the untoward return to comparative purity and buoyancy which the local atmosphere had of late years undergone. The fact is that smoke in Sheffield means not only fire, but food and fortune. There is much to be said for this artificial cloud-land from many points of view, but the painter will pour forth his soul in volumes in praise of the volumes of Vulcan as they coquet with the sun, and sidle into the company of the purified vapours of the heavens. Sir John Brown is largely responsible for the eminence, bad or good, which Sheffield has earned in the matter of smoke. When he entered upon his career the town was the cutlery capital and nothing more. Now it is the centre of the great South Yorkshire iron trade, and of that trade Sir John has been called 'the father.' The manufacture of cutlery laid gentle tri-

bute on all parts of the town, and suffused every street with a not unpleasant or unpicturesque film from its modest forges. The heavy iron trade fastened itself upon the then pastoral valley of the Don, called Attercliffe and Brightside (*sic*) into existence, as with a magic wand, and added a new terror to the east wind by making its rude breath the vehicle for the transportation of myriads of travelling 'blacks' in search of spotless window curtains and bed linen. Sheffield and its principal suburbs are right in the wake of this sooty simoom, since the 'black country,' through which the wintry blast filters, slopes down from the north-east shoulder of the town.

Sir John Brown was born in Sheffield in 1816. His father was a slater, and while his family were never so pinched by fortune as to suffer privation, yet the early circumstances of the lad savoured of the rough school from which so many dauntless heroes of industry have sprung, and which, by early accustoming its pupils to a share of the buffets of the world, prepare them to resist manfully in later life the shocks of failure, discouragement and disaster. In these early days young Brown was fortunate in two respects. In his father he had a mentor who united sterling old-fashioned virtues to a shrewd perception of the tendency of the age and of the advantages of education; and in his schoolmaster he found not only an enlightened and painstaking instructor, but a friend who probably had much to do with his start in the somewhat ambitious career upon which he had set his heart. The pastures of knowledge into which he was turned to browse were approached by three flights of stairs—most appropriately, it

might be said, for a 'rising' youth—and the modest dominie drew particular attention to his 'knowledge of the English language,' an acquirement which would not always be an entirely idle boast even in these latter days. Among the scholars of this unpretending garret-school were boys, besides young Brown, who were destined to make the names they bore eminent in local annals and familiar sounds in the world's ear. Under this roof, too—for children of both sexes imbibed knowledge from the same fount—sat, opposite to the slater's son, Miss Mary Schofield, afterwards to be gentle-hearted Lady Brown, whose death but a few months ago impoverished even the poor and awakened throughout Sheffield a thrill of tender regret. The fathers of the interesting pair thus destined to be associated from early youth to ripe age in all the gradations from lowly station to affluence and honour, were old friends, and Sir John, roving with a lingering fondness through the incidents of his early love, tells a story which is simple, even commonplace, in itself, but which, remembering that pity is akin to love, may have a significance beyond its superficial import. The schoolmaster, though not cruelly severe, belonged to the kingly race, now extinct, who had large ideas of pedagogic dignity, and who supported it with all the weight of their small despotism. When young Brown first appeared in the august presence he, with the daring of self-reliant precocity, failed to comport himself with the humility proper to the occasion, and in answer to all his tutor's interrogatories, gave a brusque 'Yessir!' and 'Nosir!' with an air of mock respect that unhinged the gravity of the assembled scholars, and

enabled them, like Goldsmith's rustics, to 'read the day's disasters' in the frowning countenance of the master. What dire punishment befell the offender we need not tell, but it is part of this love legend of Sir John's that his little sweetheart went home and acquainted her father with the audacity of 'poor Master Brown,' and tremblingly foreshadowed the terrible penalties that awaited him.

Instead of exciting permanent hostility, however, by this bold behaviour, 'poor Master Brown' became one of the pets of the master. His path over the thorny road to knowledge was made smooth and pleasant, and when the time came for the youth to cut himself adrift from the friendly anchor upon which he had accustomed himself to rely, his tutor rendered him good service in directing him into the right channel. The lad's father, in running through the list of eligible occupations for his son, had, for some reason or other, hit upon the trade of a linendraper, and propounded the idea to him. The youth met it with a determined negative. 'Why not?' demanded the father. 'I don't know, but I'll never be a linendraper.' Mr. Brown insisted, and the son resisted: 'If you put me to a linendraper I will run away—I will go to sea,' said he. This unwonted display of independent judgment somewhat staggered the parent, and led him to make the rather tardy inquiry as to what his son's choice was. 'I should like to be a merchant,' exclaimed young Brown; 'a merchant does business with all the world.' 'I had seen merchants in the town,' adds the veteran knight of to-day in explanation, and by way of condoning the wild ambition of this vague demand, 'and saw that

they were first-rate people, with large establishments, and the world at their feet.' The bold impracticability of the boy's simple programme startled and irritated his father, who, after he had recovered his breath, retorted severely, 'You will be what I say—a linendraper.' Another definite rejoinder escaped young Brown, and the scene closed with a peremptory command to leave the room. It was at this crisis that the counsel of the schoolmaster was sought, who strenuously held that the youth should not be put to any trade that he disliked. 'It shows there is something in the lad to talk about being a merchant,' he argued. 'No other boy in the school knows what it means.'

Thus it came about that in 1830, when in his fourteenth year, the lad was apprenticed to Messrs. Earl, Horton, & Co., a firm of merchants or factors, dealing in the wares of the town. At this period Sheffield was an unconsidered emporium of trade. It was not represented in Parliament. It was not an incorporated borough, and it was governed in a loose and fragmentary way by Police Commissioners and the Cutlers' Company, which latter, however, had no legal standing. By day it was pretty much left to take care of itself, and by night the duty of guardianship was shared between less than half a dozen watchmen of the 'Charley' type. The turbulent period of two years later did not pass away without bloodshed; but the town came out of the political crucible dignified with parliamentary representation, and recognised as one of the mainsprings of England's industrial progress. Those who know the Sheffield of to-day and are aware how closely The Wicker, The Moor, Rockingham-street, and Fitzwilliam-street lie against

the heart of the town may be surprised to learn that those crowded thoroughfares were then a heterogeneous mixture of country and town, of corn-fields and suburban cottages, upon which the pioneers of the local industries were preparing to pounce. Messrs. Earl, Horton, & Co.'s establishment was, at the time of John Brown's first association with it, in Orchard-place; but some six years later the firm embarked upon the manufacture of steel, files, and table cutlery, and removed to Rockingham-street, where they established the Hallamshire works. In the mean time the apprentice was discharging his duties with conspicuous ability and integrity, and though he received no wages at all during the first two years, and but six shillings a week for the remainder of his educational service, he was all the time unconsciously storing up in the minds of his employers seeds of goodwill, which, at the expiration of his term, showered upon him a profuse harvest of recompense. At the close of his novitiate his father gave him a sovereign and a suit of clothes, and bade him rely for his future success upon his own abilities and industry. When he became of age, however, a few months afterwards, Mr. Earl gave him a surprise which showed how deep was the impression which he had made upon his employers. This was no less than an invitation to enter the firm as a partner. Want of capital prevented the youth from availing himself of this generous offer; whereupon the kindly master offered him the factoring portion of the business of the firm, and in addition undertook to find money to assist him in conducting it. This opportunity was too good to be lost, and young Brown set himself to discover a means of raising his

share of the capital. His efforts resulted in one of his uncles, who was in good circumstances, joining with his father in guaranteeing 500*l.* to a bank in the town; and with this timely aid the founder of the great Atlas Works became master of a business. In this capacity he travelled through the country with horse and gig, carrying his own samples, and canvassing for his own orders. Later on he set up a four-wheeled sample carriage such as is used by one or two old-fashioned Sheffield houses to this day. By and by he made his own cutlery, and the taste for production increasing, he determined to enter upon the manufacture of steel. Too conscious of the kindness which he had received at the hands of his old employers to throw himself into competition with them against their will, he solicited and obtained from Mr. Earl their consent to this addition to his business enterprise.

With his energies thus unfettered he embarked upon that special line in which, with the intuition and foresight which form so remarkable a feature of his career, he perceived such vast and splendid possibilities. The staple products of the town he made a means rather than an end. He relied upon them during the unprofitable interval which always precedes new developments. He studied, and speculated, and experimented upon steel as the final and best product of the raw ore of the earth. The dawn of the railway era was his opportunity. He saw boundless demand in this new adjunct of civilisation, and boundless resources in the material to which he had devoted his attention. He removed to Furnival-street, applied himself solely to the production of steel, files, and railway springs, and disposed of his factoring business

to Messrs. H. G. Long & Co. For several years these articles were his chief manufactures; but another railway specialty was destined to carry him into the full tide of prosperity which he afterwards enjoyed. Up to 1848 railway rolling stock presented an appearance which would now appear strange—it was practically bufferless. Mr. Brown saw here a necessity which would soon become imperative, and he patented the conical spring buffer. Its success, for a novelty appealing to railway companies, was prompt, but by and by it became overwhelming. His first customers for it were the now thriving Taff Vale Railway Company, the Glasgow and South-Western, and the Dublin and Drogheda Companies. Before long he was turning out 150 sets per week. Shop after shop was added to his parent establishment in Furnival-street in various parts of the town, and a spring shop was taken at Rotherham. The inconvenience of these scattered branches became so oppressive that he soon began to cast about for an opportunity to concentrate and consolidate. The opportunity came in 1854, when the Queen's Works in Saville-street—the part of the town which is now dedicated to rolling-mills and steam-hammers—were offered for sale. These works covered three acres, only a third of which was built upon; and by way of contrast it may be mentioned that under their new title, the Atlas, they now embrace twenty-five acres. The only manufacturing emigrants of present importance that preceded Mr. Brown in this then rural region were Messrs. Charles Cammell & Co., and Messrs. Thomas Firth & Sons. In that day the sky was as blue and the air as pure in the Don Valley as in the Peak of Derbyshire. Wild flowers

danced before the office windows, and the tender foliage of adjacent woods for a short time resisted the blighting influences of furnace and forge. But ere long, as firm after firm added their sooty quota to the industrial settlement, the flowers ceased to bloom, the trees became stunted scarecrows, and the country landscape was blotted out. Now vegetable life is a tradition hard to believe in. Every yard of ground as far as the eye can reach (which, in times of 'prosperity,' is not far) is redolent of the devastating trade introduced by the subject of this paper.

But if the Atlas Works brought destruction to Nature they brought life and prosperity to man. The great exhibition had put trade generally upon its feet; but if there was an industry to which the vast show lent impetus and vigour it was the iron and steel trade. The age of iron had arrived with the railways, and in its train it had brought the germ of the age of steel, of which we see probably nearly the full development to-day. Sheffield was always peculiarly the seat of the steel trade, and the railway material to which Mr. Brown had given his attention increased enormously the demand for what is called steel-iron. Hitherto this had come almost exclusively from Sweden and Russia, which the natural advantages of rich ore and unlimited charcoal resources still constitute important producing centres for raw material of the best class. Mr. Brown saw not only that the time must come when Sweden would be unable to respond to the ever-augmenting demand, but also that an important industry of a new and perfectly legitimate kind might be introduced into Sheffield. The only attempt to

produce iron for steel-making purposes at that time being made in this country was conducted at a small concern in Staffordshire, and practically none but foreign iron was used by the steel manufacturers. Mr. Brown, to use a northern phrase, 'put his mind in steep' on the subject. He gauged the difficulties, and speculated upon the consequences of success. He took the opportunity of mentioning the project at a meeting of Sheffield manufacturers, and was laughed at, as all great pioneers of industry are, as the pursuer of a chimera. The founder of the Atlas Works, however, was not a man to retreat before ridicule. Tenacity and resolution were the guardian sentinels of his genius, and throughout his active career they never permitted him to waver in the pursuit of an object which his judgment commended. The adverse reception of his scheme by his fellow-manufacturers stimulated rather than damped his determination, and before very long the men who had foretold failure came to swell the tide of his success, and buy from him iron which Sweden could not supply on the same terms. It was this achievement that conferred upon Sir John Brown the honourable title of the 'father of the iron trade' in South Yorkshire, and no doubt largely contributed to the continued supremacy of Sheffield as the metropolis of steel.

Having thus laid a foundation for business on a large scale, the proprietor of the Atlas Works threw all his prodigious energy and tact into the concern, and soon became one of the leading manufacturers of Sheffield. How rapidly his business increased at this time may be gathered from the fact that whilst in 1856 his turnover was 63,000*l.*, in the following year it had augmented by one



third, being 95,000*l*. To John Brown's acute perception and enterprise Mr. Bessemer owed not a little encouragement at a time when the famous Bessemer process of steel-making seemed to hang midway between success and failure. Mr. Brown did his best to turn the tide in the inventor's favour by taking and promptly availing himself of the first license to manufacture issued under Mr. Bessemer's patent.

During these early years of the Saville-street works many things were added to the list of their productions. The railway material trade floated Mr. Brown into prosperity, and this was reinforced from time to time by the addition of boiler- and bridge-plates, &c., as well as the manufacture of steel-iron already alluded to. But at this time the establishment, unconsciously to its head, was within measurable distance of a new departure which was destined to make not England alone, but all Europe, ring with the name of John Brown—the production of thick rolled plates for the defence of vessels of war. This portentous development of naval warfare may be said to have been due, like many other great discoveries, to accident. It is, indeed, a contribution to the romance of industrial history. Returning from a brief Continental tour in 1860, Mr. Brown found himself in Toulon, and into Toulon harbour steamed a French man-of-war of a new type which had given our Government some amount of anxious concern. It was the *La Gloire*, whose high decks had been 'improved off' the vessel, and such portions of her as could not conveniently be placed under water clad in iron armour four and a half inches in thickness. The ship not unnaturally excited the visitor's curiosity. He

asked to be allowed to go on board, but was refused. Under these circumstances he got as near to her as he could, examined her suit of mail at a respectful distance, and picked up as much information generally as astute officials could be made to drop. Mr. Brown found that the four and a half inch armour consisted of hammered plates five feet long and two feet wide. He returned to Sheffield, convinced that he could produce plates tougher, more uniform in strength, thicker, and larger by the process of rolling. It was a hazardous experiment, involving a large outlay in plant and patience, and tests almost as expensive. Nevertheless, he determined to take the risk. He erected a rolling mill, selected his workmen, buckled himself to the task, and in a short time, after some preliminary communications of a not very encouraging character with the Admiralty, he invited Lord Palmerston, then Prime Minister, to visit Sheffield, and see a plate rolled for himself.

It should be explained here that his busy life as a manufacturer had not prevented him from taking his share of the municipal cares of the town, and in this year of 1862 he was enabled to offer the Premier a chief magistrate's hospitality. Lord Palmerston responded to the invitation. The plate-rolling was a complete success, and his lordship saw an armour-slab turned out of the mill upwards of six tons in weight, measuring 18 ft. 6 in. long, 3 ft. 9 in. wide, and 5½ inches thick. Previous to that the Government appeared to have come to the easy—or uneasy—conclusion that no plate thicker than the French armour—four and a half inches—could be produced and adapted to the requirements of naval defence. When

we reflect that armour-clads are now riding the deep with apparent comfort wrapped in a casing of iron and steel some twenty-two inches in thickness, the extent to which official wisdom was mistaken may be realised. The fact was, as Mr. Childers himself aptly said the other day, the guns of twenty years ago were mere popguns in comparison with the monster ordnance of to-day. Guns of five or six tons were the most destructive weapons of offence that could be mustered. Mr. Childers stated that he was scoffed at as being 'absurdly before the times' when only some eight or ten years ago he proposed to arm our navy with thirty-five and thirty-seven ton guns, whereas we are now ready to sweep the seas with ordnance of eighty and one-hundred ton calibre. The difference between John Brown and the Admiralty was, that whilst he was a practical man and a pioneer of progress, 'my lords,' although members of a Liberal Government, were theorists of a very Conservative school. John Brown allowed for advances in artillery, and saw that though only four and a half inches of armour could be pierced by the ordnance of the day, the time would come when fourteen and a half inches would not withstand the shock of an enemy's ball. The fact was, his neighbours, Messrs. Firth & Sons, were, in a sense, bombarding him. Just across the way this firm were casting the guns that were to shatter his plates, and the head of the Atlas had, as it were, the din of battle in his ears.

The result of his negotiations with the Admiralty was that Mr. Brown threw a challenge down to the Government. He offered to roll three plates of five, seven, and eight inches in thickness

respectively. These plates were to be fixed to a certain kind of target, and if they failed to resist the shot that penetrated the four and a half inch armour, he undertook to bear the cost of the tests. As has been shown, Lord Palmerston saw a five and a half inch plate produced; but in order to turn out the thicker armour a new rolling mill had to be laid down. At the opening of this mill in April 1863, the Duke of Somerset and the other lords of the Admiralty were present; and after they had seen its capabilities they returned to London wiser, and probably sadder, men. They witnessed the rolling of plates ranging in thickness, not from four and a half inches to eight only, but to twelve. The twelve-inch slab measured about twenty feet in length; and subsequently a five-inch plate was made, upwards of forty feet long and four feet wide. The success of the day's work was more than complete, and it removed from the official mind the film of prejudice which had previously stood in Mr. Brown's path. The occasion was one of triumph to the men as well as to the master; for it was the pride and boast of the latter that his *employés* felt a common interest with himself in whatever affected the works and their prosperity. There was a cheer as the distinguished party approached to inspect the huge slab of metal, and the host paused to give them a characteristic word of praise: 'We are all proud of your exploits; you are worthy of the name of Englishmen. His Grace the Duke of Somerset wishes me to express his admiration of what you have done.'

In the large dining-room, erected in the suite of offices for the convenience of the staff, a collation was provided, and the Duke

of Somerset proposed the health of the head of the establishment in these terms: 'We are very glad to come here, and I am sure I have profited and been very much interested in what I have seen to-day. Nothing is more interesting to me than seeing these works, and seeing the men of these works; to see the intelligence, the good temper, and the kindly feeling towards the head of the establishment. It has convinced me that the men themselves are well-treated, that they feel they are well-treated, and they showed what great kindness and good judgment must be possessed by the head of the establishment. That is the only way in which you can carry on great works like these we have seen to-day. I cannot, therefore, close the observations I have made without asking you to drink the health of Mr. Brown, coupling it with "Prosperity to the new rolling-mill," for it is a great thing in the proceedings of this day. It is the most striking thing, and will be in the future one of the most wonderful pieces of machinery that have ever been made in this country.'

*Punch* had a droll account of this auspicious occasion, which is worth referring to in order to show with what admirable satire he hit off the relations of Ministers and manufacturer.

"Now," said Mr. Punch, "let the ceremonial proceed. Somerset, my boy, do you think you understand anything about the process?"

"Well, yes," said the First Lord of the Admiralty, "I think I do. You see, they make it hot, and then—"

"Make what hot? Brandy-and-water? That reminds me that I should like a little, for I am far from well."

"I mean the iron," said the Duke, when Mr. Punch had finished the liquid that was tendered to him as he spoke.

"Well, why didn't you say the iron? didn't you like to speak ironically?"

'It is well that Mr. Brown has built his works strongly, for a shout like that which followed would have brought down any light erection.'

"Well," said the Duke, "they take it out of the furnace and roll it between these rollers, and that is all."

"Not quite," said the Mayor, with a quiet look at Mr. Punch; "but his Grace is not altogether an unintelligent observer. Here comes a plate."

'The brawny giants suddenly drew open the door of a vast furnace, and you had an idea that a large piece of blazing fire had got in there by accident, and it was about as possible to look in the face of the fire as of Phœbus. Then, tugged forth by the giants, out came a large slab of red-hot metal, just the thing for a dining-table in Pandemonium, and it was received upon a mighty iron truck, and hurried along to the jaws of the rolling-machine. As it was drawn fiercely into the mill a volcano broke out, and the air was filled with a shower of fire-spangles of the largest construction, and eminently calculated to make holes in your garments. The monster slab was so mercilessly taken in hand by the mighty wheels, and was hurled backwards and forwards, under terrific pressure, and so squeezed and rolled and consolidated that when at length it was flung, exhausted, as it were, upon the iron floor beyond, Mr. Punch was reminded of the way in which he has dealt with, improved, and educated the public mind for the last twenty years.'

"And that's the way I propose to defend the British Navy," said the Duke of Somerset, looking as if he had done it all.

"Mr. Mayor," said Mr. Punch, "it makes me thirsty to hear these aristocratic muffs going on in this manner. I hear you have spent 100,000*l.* in this single part of your works in six months, and that you are going to build largely in addition. Sir, I suppose that we, the nation, shall have to pay you a trifle for what you manufacture?"

"Mr. Brown smiled, as if he thought that just possible.

"Sir," continued Mr. Punch, I rejoice thereat. I don't care what these things cost. I consider them the cheap defence of nations, at least of our nation, which is the only one I care a red cent about. These things will make war as nearly impossible as anything in this mad world can be; and therefore, Mr. Brown, I hope that you will go on making them until further notice."

Alas for the infallibility of our merry and wise monarch! He is older than he was, and would scarcely lay the flattering unction to his soul to-day.

The 100,000*l.* which Mr. Punch mentioned as the outlay entailed by the development of the armour-plate branch of Mr. Brown's business soon fell very short of the actual figures. As soon as he felt that he had solved the problem, and was assured of the support of the Government, he put, practically, no limit upon his judgment. He gave his always enterprising spirit full play, confident that he had struck a vein that would yield a golden harvest. He set about the extension of his premises to some twenty acres, and in this, as in every other detail of his business, he was master of the situation and

the directing mind. He was his own architect. Every building was traced under his immediate instruction. Even the mechanical engineers who supplied him with machinery were called upon to abandon precedent and work to his ideas. When a well-known Glasgow machinist offered his most powerful productions, and challenged the proprietor of the Atlas Works to break them, Mr. Brown simply answered that he must have stronger work, and called for the maker's designs. Upon these he marked the portions where he considered greater strength would be required, and the result was that he was supplied with monster machines, twice as powerful as any before made.

The Sir John Brown of to-day is justifiably proud to recall the fact that his attitude at this period represents him in the light of an Englishman first and a cosmopolitan trader afterwards. As soon as it would permit him he served his country first. For not the first time in the history of English industrial progress foreign Governments first recognised, and were anxious to profit by, the genius of the inventor. Ere the authorities at home were able to make up their minds, pressing orders from other Powers came to Mr. Brown for rolled armour plates, while yet the home Government were dallying with the new departure, but he steadily declined to execute them without the consent of the Admiralty, with whom he was in tedious negotiation. The Northern States of America, on the verge of deadly conflict with the South, begged him to supply his heavy armour in vain, and autocratic Russia found in the son of the Sheffield slater an autocrat as obdurate and powerful in his way as the Czar himself.

The next important revolution in the trade of which the proprietor of the Atlas Works was the pioneer was a revolution in rails—the change which has now converted the permanent way of almost every railway in the world into paths of steel. This was one result of the Bessemer process, of which, as we have said, Mr. Brown was the first to avail himself. In this case also the foreigner was first in the field in appreciation of improvement; and as there were no reasons of a patriotic nature to influence the manufacturer in stimulating English perception and open-mindedness, Mr. Brown placed no obstacle in the way of the French railway companies who first tendered him support. By and by, when the French, the Italians, and some other Continental peoples had demonstrated the importance of adopting steel instead of iron rails, the English engineers began to wake up to a sense of the progressiveness of human affairs, and to think seriously on the change which others had inaugurated. But even then they thought, like Washington, ‘slowly,’ and not half so surely. They complained of the price of the steel rails as compared with iron, the former being then some 28*l.* per ton against 12*l.* for the latter, to which Mr. Brown replied that if they cost double the amount, they would stand at least six times the amount of wear and tear. Still the English companies held back, and Mr. Brown saw that he could only convince them by practical demonstration. He made them presents of samples of rails, and allowed them to make their own tests. The London, Chatham, and Dover Company laid down at the Victoria Station six steel rails from the Atlas Works and six iron rails from the Ebbw Vale Works at the same

time, with the result that the latter were replaced twelve times before the former required renewal. Such overwhelming evidence as this could not be disputed. The demand for steel rails became prodigious, and within a very few years ninety per cent of the main line of the Great Northern Company was relaid with steel. Every year the orders for iron rails grow feebler; and with steel rails at from 5*l.* to 6*l.* per ton we can now appreciate at its due value the foresight which fought against the obliquity of the railway companies.

A host of other branches of the iron trade, which do not call for special notice, were from time to time added to the business of the Atlas Works. These contributed largely to the dimensions of the concern; and long before the period of which we have just spoken Mr. Brown took into partnership Mr. J. D. Ellis and Mr. W. Bragge. Later on the expansion of the business had become such that it was deemed advisable to convert the concern into a limited company, and on February 22, 1864, this project was carried out, the capital subscribed being no less than 1,000,000*l.* The founder of the firm naturally took the post of chairman.

Sir John Brown for some years has ceased to have any interest in the company which trades under his name. It may have been that he found the restraints which the interests and claims of a large body of shareholders necessarily imposed upon him, and of which he had previously been so free, irksome, or perhaps he felt that, having built up name and fortune during an active career of forty years, and received from her Majesty the crowning honour of the edifice, he was entitled to give himself up to the *otium cum dignitate*. Probably the step was

due to a little of both considerations.

In the course of a career so picturesque and remarkable, there must be many incidents of interest to serve to show the secret springs of success, and to give some idea of the grit of the man. 'Neither chance nor fortune' is the English rendering of the motto that adorns Sir John Brown's coat-of-arms, and the words convey with sufficient clearness the principles upon which he worked. These were in brief—honesty, thoroughness, and punctuality in their most rigid form. A striking instance of the value of the last rule occurred in the earlier part of Sir John's career, and gave him the most encouraging practical proof that the virtue was worth cultivating. At the time when the Edinburgh, Perth, and Dundee Railway was about to be opened, he was in the former city, and chanced to call on Mr. Grainger, the engineer of the line. Everything was in readiness, except a few sets of brake springs, which the contractor was unable to supply; and as it seemed impossible to get the articles required in so short a time, it looked as though the ship was going to be spoiled for the want of a pennyworth of tar. Mr. Grainger mentioned the matter to his visitor, and in sheer desperation asked him if he could supply the springs 'by Thursday.' This was on the Saturday, and Mr. Brown replied that, considering the imperfect carrying communication, he feared the time was too short. 'Well,' rejoined Mr. Grainger, 'we must have them.' The visitor considered for a moment, and then said, 'You shall have them.' Away he started forthwith to Berwick, took the train and coach for Newcastle, train forward, and reached Sheffield at eleven P.M. on Sunday. Here he went straight to his fore-

man, told him to have the men there first thing in the morning, and gave positive orders that the springs were to be ready on Monday night. The goods were packed at the appointed time, and away the maker flew with his burden to Manchester for steamer at Fleetwood. Here he had arranged to have a wagon ready to convey the springs to the station from which the mail for the north started. He was in time for the train; but when he presented his consignment, a new difficulty met him in the refusal of the officials to load such goods in the mail. Mr. Brown went straightway to the manager, told him his case, and got a horse-box put on to convey the springs. After a devious journey, and not without many threatening *contretemps* and anxious moments, the traveller reached Glasgow *via* Ardrossan at five o'clock on the Wednesday afternoon, to the amazement and gratification of the engineer. Mr. Grainger not only compensated the enterprising manufacturer for his outlay and pains, but also introduced his feat to the notice of most of the railway directors present at the opening ceremony, and the gallant effort threw into John Brown's works for a considerable time the bulk of the Scotch trade in railway material.

As in the lexicon of youth there is no such word as 'fail,' so in the well-selected vocabulary which the founder of the Atlas Works chose as his *vade mecum* when he resolved in the flattering ardour of youth to be a 'merchant,' there was no such word as 'impossible.' The proscription of the verbal refuge of the average mortal was not the outcome of a principle peculiar to the subject of this paper. The spirit which underlay it is as old as human aspiration, though a good deal less common. But with



John Brown it was a solemn and severe observance. He was a contemptuous unbeliever in the finality of human power in matters material, and the word jarred. He gloried in the broad truth of the sarcasm of the French *savant*—'If it is "difficult," it is done already; if it is "impossible," it shall be done.' The servant who entered his presence and maintained that a given task was impossible quitted the room without a situation. The master was relentless on this subject. He could tolerate and sympathise with a fair representation of the difficulty of a proposal, but he exacted from all his *employés* a *bonâ-fide* co-operation in the mastery of it. And if any man ever had a right to be dogmatic and austere on such a point, surely the bearing became him who, from the doorstep of a slater's home, successfully stormed the frowning strongholds of fortune, fame, and title.

Qualities like these rallied rather than repelled his workmen. The passing allusion of the Duke of Somerset to the strong bond of union that evidently existed between employer and employed singled out, as if by intuition, the keystone of the great industrial fabric. John Brown was not a counting-house chief, a trading tradition to be approached only through a dozen deputies. He worked new ideas upon old lines. He was old-fashioned and conservative in all that was robust and healthy in English character; receptive and radical in all that gave promise of progress. This union of qualities, this running of new blood into the old veins, was a happy basis for the welfare of the Atlas Works. The master was a living and visible head, knowing every man in the yard, and known and approachable to all. The result was mutual respect; and on

occasion, as the sterling character of the master asserted itself in high relief, that respect deepened on the one side into actual reverence. Such an occasion arose when, soon after the firm had gone into the iron trade, a vast building, 365 feet in length, was being added to the covered portion of the premises. The undertaking was an expensive one, and not the least important feature of it was the time occupied in construction. One Sunday morning, shortly after the roof had been put on and the building finished, a man, pale and breathless, darted into the old parish Church of Sheffield, and inquired for Mr. John Brown.

'What is the matter?' asked the latter, when he had passed out of the door, and saw one of his own workmen before him, with big tears standing in his eyes.

'It's all down, sir!' gasped the man.

'What is down?' rejoined the master.

'The roof of the building is blown down!' returned the messenger.

'All down?'

'All, sir.'

'Then go to Harvey at once, and tell him to prepare to put it up again,' said Mr. Brown; and, pocketing the loss of the thousand pounds involved without a word of regret, to the amazement of the man he turned and went back into the church to hear the sermon.

Work at the Atlas Works was always well done, and the old spirit of thoroughness lingers with them yet. Their founder would never allow doubtful workmanship to go off the premises. Doubtful workmen went off instead. This policy has been the sole talisman of those great Sheffield houses whose names are, like Scrooge's, 'good on 'Change' all

the world over—the Rodgers, the Jessops, the Firths, the Wostenholms, and others. In his retirement, Sir John is as unbending as ever in his insistence on good and honest work. Every piece of joinery used in the construction of his noble mansion at Endcliffe was made and put together in the rough twelve months before it was required, and every stone and ornament bear an impress that would equally surprise and delight Mr. Ruskin—‘Truth.’ To this golden rule is to be attributed in a very great degree the fact with which Sir John closes his self-revelation: ‘My works always pushed me. I could never make them large enough.’

Such is an outline of the industrial history of Sir John Brown. His social career is outside the province of this article; but it may be said to have been in keeping with his splendid success as an inventor and a manufacturer. When he turned his back upon the industrial hive which he had established, he recognised the truism that

‘Absence of occupation is not rest;

A mind quite vacant is a mind distressed.’

He was never so completely immersed in his own affairs as to forget the duties of citizenship. He had gone through the best municipal training when his fellow-townsmen laid tribute upon his dignified leisure as the knight of Endcliffe Hall, and made him chairman of the first School Board in Sheffield. As town councillor, alderman, mayor twice, Master Cutler twice, magistrate, town trustee, Church Burgess, and Deputy-Lieutenant of the West Riding, Sir John Brown has served his native town without stint, and always with honour, wisdom, and success. Recently his bust has been placed in the board-room of the

School Board in commemoration of his services to that body. Advancing years and domestic anxieties, necessitating travel, have of late years deprived Sheffield of his counsel and the advantage of his administrative powers, and have now thrown beyond realisation the hope at one time entertained, that he would represent the town in Parliament. As a magistrate and Chairman of Ecclesall Board of Guardians Sir John is still, indeed, linked to public life; but the heavy blow which so long threatened has recently fallen. The death of Lady Brown was not a purely private calamity. Her quick sympathies and silent charity rendered her better known among the poor than in society, and the suspension of her kindly enterprises has left a gap in many humble homes and hearts.

A brief allusion must be made to the chief of Sir John's public benefactions—the handsome church that, standing upon a high shoulder of ground, looks down upon the ‘black country’ which the donor did so much to colonise. The rapid development of the district drew attention to the dearth of religious accommodation, and one of the first to recognise the necessities of the case was the proprietor of the Atlas Works. He found 20,000 people without the means of attending a place of worship. The church which formerly covered the district was situated a considerable distance away, and would only seat 500 persons. A commission was appointed to mark out an ecclesiastical district embracing 10,000 souls. Before the scheme had been carried into effect, however, the Church Extension Society was formed, and Mr. Brown at once offered to subscribe 5000*l.*; but finding this likely to result in the construction of an edifice in-

adequate and unsatisfactory, he decided to erect the church entirely at his own cost. The offer was accepted, and the corner stone was laid on May 19th, 1866, by the Archbishop of York. The edifice was ready some twelve months before it was opened for public service, owing to an unfortunate dispute with the vicar of a neighbouring church on the subject of the right of patronage. On Feb. 5th, 1869, however, the church, which was dedicated to 'All Saints,' was opened by the Archbishop, who, in referring to the noble gift of Sir John Brown, said: 'I feel persuaded from many conversations, and therefore from what I know, that the feeling uppermost in his mind was not to raise a grand temple, which, seen from afar by men, would be an ornament to the town, and a monument to his own liberality. I feel sure it was his great anxiety to labour to do what he could towards the saving of the souls of those who work for him.' The total cost of the edifice was some 11,500*l.*, and to this sum Sir John subsequently added 700*l.* for a peal of bells. Few who have had experience of the donor's sterling character will doubt the truth of what Dr. Thomson said in the foregoing tribute; but what Sir John would have shrunk from doing the grateful Sheffield folk have had no compunction in doing for him. As Pope says:

'Who builds a church to God, and not to fame,

Will never mark the marble with his name.'

But if a stranger asked to be directed to All Saints' Church, the probability is that he would be told Sheffield possessed no such edifice. 'John Brown's Church' is a landmark from which distances are measured and localities fixed. It is the pivot upon which

the topographical world of that half of the town revolves.

In indicating, faintly enough, the qualities that have sustained Sir John Brown in his extraordinary career, the assistance of his contemporaries and of impartial observers must be invoked. The testimony of these is in singular agreement. In the words of one honoured citizen of Sheffield, he 'always seemed to see a little ahead of everybody else.' He was essentially a pioneer, with the daring, the coolness, and the pertinacity that go to make pioneering work successful. He broke new ground, but he was gifted with a rare power of appraisal which enabled him to decide accurately whether the new ground was worth the breaking. He was quicker in his perception of the advantages of new ideas than some rivals who prided themselves upon being less chained to old-fashioned notions than Sir John Brown. But, as has been pointed out, his was a moral rather than material conservatism. He stuck to the living forces of the mind and heart, and would embrace no new-fangled idea that compromised the solid virtues of English character. Thus he welded old and new, and found in the combination the secret of true progress. A very prince of progress in this form, he often made it his business to take time by the forelock, and grease the wheels of the van of civilisation. There is one final example of conservatism in Sir John Brown which all will admire, and which illustrates, in a peculiarly touching way, the simplicity of his tastes and the goodness of his heart. 'I have often felt,' said he to the writer, 'that I should like to spend the last five years of my life exactly as I spent my time fifty years ago—with the same home, the same friends, the same haunts.'

H. J. PALMER.

## UNWIDOWED.

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THEY ask me, Shall I love again?  
Alas, they little know my heart!  
For twenty graves would yawn in vain  
That woman from my life to part.

*They* see her now no more, I know;  
But still with me she smiles and talks;  
And where the flowers she cherished blow,  
Beside me still at eve she walks.

I loved her once, and won her love  
(Green days, and yet in memory green);  
And now she is my wife above—  
Above, and here, by men unseen.

My wife—although the form I loved  
In death's gray mist is coldly furled;  
My wife—however far removed,  
The sweetest woman in the world.

What, then, is left with me to give,  
Since I am hers, and hers alone?  
Dear wife, around me love and live,  
My angel, and not less my own!

Thou know'st that tale we read of yore—  
The hound that on his master's grave  
Pitched camp till death; and thou much more  
Wilt camp around my mortal cave.

Yet am I selfish. Are there joys  
Thou must forego to wait with me,  
And only hear the golden noise  
Far off, and only far off see?

O, I were jealous of sweet heaven,  
Did I not know how, from thy youth,  
Thy only joys were those whose heaven  
Is love and sacrifice and truth.

So, from the freer life above  
My dungeon, kiss me through the bars;  
Thou art my bride, thou art my love,  
This side or that side of the stars!

WALKER BURNING.

## SOME WESTERN EXPERIENCES.

WE dropped down—perilously far down it seemed to me—from the last step of our carriage plump in virgin mud, full an eighth of a mile from the nearest building. That nearest building was a long low shed, ostentatiously yellow with piney youth, perched upon crutches or stilts, and ascended, like the Capitoline Hill, by means of an immense inclined plane ridged with supports for the feet. It was piled high with stuffed grain sacks, as could be seen through its wide open door, and was spoken of with conscious pride by the villagers as ‘our noo *deepo*.’

A few villagers were gathered about the train, its daily arrival being the diurnal and never waning sensation of the hamlet. The most of them, hands in pockets, were idly looking on, while one caught the slim mail bag, throwing another into the car in its stead; one exchanged packages with the elegantly moustached, bediamonded, and jaunty express messenger; one or two others climbed into the train which would carry them to their mighty metropolis of twenty thousand souls some fifty miles away.

To my indignant disappointment not one of these villagers was extravagant in hat-brim or boot-leg. Not one of them was red-belted or pistol-environed. Neither fringe, feathers, nor buckskin loomed upon my expectant vision. I smarted under a sense of wrong that picturesque fancy was not cajoled even with rainbow-head or blood-

red flannel, and that every man wore a shirt more or less white, and ‘store clothes’ in which could be traced generic likenesses to the masculine raiment of that effete civilisation which had just cast me out.

Had we indeed come so far, braved danger on heaving water and death on shuddering rail, only to find the Joaquin Millerised westerner on his native prairie but a sallow and looser-jointed Yankee than those we had left by the far eastern sea!

‘I’ll wager that they have literary conversaziones and sketch from Nature,’ growled S.

‘There’s plenty of clay modelling about their legs,’ I sniffed, nose in air, and determined not to be propitiated that cowhide, thick with mud, replaced the romantic leggings I had set my heart upon.

The station was evidently in a depression between two undulations of the prairie. From where we stood, a miry road, with fat alluvial soil, strong in potentiality of opulent harvests, although now ploughed only by hoofs and wheels, stretched before and behind us up two long gentle slopes, over the tops of which the road disappeared. In the whole length of the road before and behind us only two pedestrians (carrying dogs, pigs, hogs, and such small deer) were to be seen, picking slow way across that sticky chaos. One wagon—a long unpainted box affair without springs—stood in front of a small building half-way up the rise or ‘prairie roll’ before us. Before one or two doors,

presumably of 'stores' from the flannel shirts, over-alls, and festoons of gingham and muslin hanging before them, two or three stalwart westerners were tilted back in chairs. A sun-bonnet or two was wavering back and forth in gardens. An open space, dusky and lurid as mouth of Plutonian cavern, with silhouette demon hammering before dancing flames, was two-thirds up the road, and these were all the signs of life we saw beyond the little group at the deepo.

The village consisted of this one long street; the houses and shops, or 'stores,' ranged along it with the regularity of figures in the Parthenaic frieze. Scarcely a tree was to be seen, not a hedge or shrub, not a blooming flower or swelling bud, not a single decorative branch or vine, in a land where Nature responds so readily to the idlest asking, that vines and plants grow, like Jonah's gourd, almost in a night.

The dwellings were usually enclosed by two rows of boards nailed to an occasional post, to which the bark still adhered.

Each side of the miry road was a narrow border, a sort of Pompeian arrangement of gold against black, just wide enough for two persons to walk abreast. This Pompeian decoration was scarcely regarded by the villagers as having decorative value or æsthetic significance. To them it was, instead, cap-sheaf and keystone of the village's sumptuous civilisation—its new side-walk.

The houses, mostly unpainted, stood somewhat widely apart, and were built after the Italianised Gothic of certain Tuscan cathedrals. That is, each had a frontispiece magnificently out of proportion to the edifice behind it, pyramidal façades, lacking cusped niche, imaged bracket, sculptured

cornice, and saint-crowned apex to beequally impressive, yet giving as vital impression of *aspiration* as ever spiritualised Gothic lines, even if of aspiration not spiritual, but mundane. There were no porticoes, porches, piazzas, not a flying gable or round arch—nothing but Doric simplicity of ten-foot rears, fronted with Tuscan façades at least twenty feet high.

We walked up the Pompeian decoration, through the cracks of which ribbon-grass grew and fluttered. Half-way up a woman stood aside to let us pass, in a bright red sun-bonnet stiffened with pasteboard, and long calico train stiffened with mud.

'Marm,' she said, 'who be you a-lookun fer? I ken put you stre?' (straight).

We were looking for the 'hotel' two steps away. We stepped directly from the side-walk into a narrow entry, hung with straw hats, bits of harness, slimpsey linen garments that somehow reminded one of drowned corpses of masculine raiment, to find ourselves in the parlour. It was a lead-coloured room newly painted. A rag carpet covered the floor, and a profusion of braided mats covered the carpet. The sofa was hair-cloth, the chairs of cane; cotton curtains at the windows were edged with coarse hand-knit trimming. George Washington in frame of pop-corn and family ambrotypes in one of wood hung over a decoration of pine. This decoration was supported on turned brackets, and was called a chimney or mantelpiece, although not a chimney was in the hamlet. Such are sometimes the feeble forms in which majestic ideas expire; the glorious gods of old Greece dying in agonies of grotesqueness as Christian saints on Lombardic sarcophagi, the monumental chimneypiece of the Renaissance



expiring on western prairies as a strip of painted pine.

The sheet-iron stove stood in the centre of the room upon a zinc-covered dais. Its pipes soaring away through ceilings and upper chambers out through the roof. Harps and cornucopias of varnished acorns and leather leaves decorated the walls, and the room in its *ensemble* was the most elegant within fifty miles.

The manner of our life at the inn did not lack novelty. My little room was the prophet's or prince's chamber, according to the character of the guest. Its one window looked over a collection of pig-pens, an expanse of ploughed ground, then a monotony of green billows rising behind one another, so near the sky that I was shut away as by solid wall of emerald from the marvellous sunsets that had been one of the promised delights of my western life.

But although Nature's splendours were shut away from me, I had those of art. My imposing-looking bed, which ignominiously 'caved' upon the slightest excuse, was covered with one of those triumphs of human genius called 'album quilts.' Every white square was inscribed in marking-ink with an appropriate sentiment and the name of the donor. The one which oftenest greeted my waking eyes moved my soul with stately cadences.

'When th's you see,  
Remember me;  
For as this I do  
I think of you.

MOLLIE SANDERS.'

The first day of the second week, going to my room after breakfast, I was startled to find my pillows, erst clad in white, dressed in chocolate print, exactly like the dress in which Sis had waited upon table. I found later that in full half those cathedral-

facaded houses the 'fore-room' was *salle-à-manger*, *chambre-à-coucher*, and *salon* in one; and the bed was always dressed, save on such ceremonious occasions as sewing-bee or tea-party, in the darkest and most serviceable prints that could be found.

I could exist with pig-pens usurping the place of sunsets, but with coloured pillow-slips—perish the thought! I dived among my own effects, and soon those pillows suggested the thinnest of hand-spikes in the white raiment of the most opulently contoured of pursers.

'Sis' was sixteen, freckled, with white eyelashes, a long calico train, and red 'waterfall,' second only to Niagara. She was daughter of the innkeeper, with lark's voice and motion, and was 'hail fellow well met' with the boarders, whom she bullied and quizzed. Woe to the luckless wight who tried to bandy witticisms with her! More than once have I seen the head of some such foolish one unwilling pelectal, and with expression of mediæval gargoyle, for the immense platter from which Sis served the *pièce de résistance* of the meal, the miserable gargoyle not daring even to wink lest floods of gravy descend upon it. It was Sis who always rang the dinner-bell, standing in the middle of the road before the house, and swinging the boisterous thing till its brazen voice echoed far out over the billowy prairie. Then from bench and forge, from office and counter, from gossiping coterie at the post-office (which was also drapery, mercery, stationer's, chemist's, grocery, and faience establishment all in one), from washing-bench at the back-door, where tin basin and crash roller were free to every comer, from garden, prairie, and 'noo deepo' rushed the bachelor boarders, who

met three times a day around that neatly-served table. They took their repast invariably in linen coats, said coats always remaining between meals suspended from nails in the front entry. So obtuse had my perceptions become amid the rotten civilisation of cities that I failed to discover a compliment to myself in this uniformity of linen, till, after leaving the inn for our own house, I chanced one day to peep into the dining-room where twelve celibates sat at meat *with not a coat among them.*

One noon the dinner-bell was laggingly answered by blacksmith, carpenter, dapper young clerk, and district judge from the metropolis.

'Now jest look ahere, you uns!' exclaimed Sis indignantly; 'ef you've done gone, shut yer cabbage-heads onter the notion that I'll stand sech conducts as these, you're jest sucked in. You, Jedge Brown, you'll jest have to eat your pork done gone cold.'

The boyish 'Judge' laughed, and answered Sis somewhat after the same republican simplicity of manner.

That same afternoon, fleeing my shutterless western window, I was reading in the dining-room. I was surprised to see Sis lay the table for six o'clock supper, while yet the sun was so high, and still more surprised when I heard the bell making frenzied uproar in the street. I obeyed eloquent convulsion of white eyelashes, and remained in my seat by the window, when judge, carpenter, and others came rushing in, chorus-ing with wonder that the afternoon had seemed so short. The hands of the clock told six.

'Laws!' exclaimed Sis, glancing up at it. 'Reckon I mought as well turn that there clock's snoot back agin, now I'm done gone

sure you uns won't be late for supper.'

And she turned it back, just the sixty minutes that must elapse before those deluded souls could eat.

Strangers were not unknown in our inn. One day a dashing individual, perfumed and jewelled, addressed me at the dinner-table:

'Marm, I calculate that that there's a *real* diamond in your ring.'

S. was not there to answer for me, so I was obliged to calculate that 'that there' was no sham.

'Would you like to swop it, marm, for dry goods, millinery, pins, needles, embroidery, gaiter boots, Cologne water, hair-oil, face-powder, pills?'

Another day a voice addressed me from vague regions remote:

'Marm, jest tell yer ole man that them air harness need a right smart o' grease.'

My 'ole man,' aged twenty-four, was again absent, but intuition told me that the speaker was he who had borrowed his sulkey and belongings a few hours before.

Once I failed to appear at table during several meals. When I came down at last to supper (in a print peignoir) ample proof awaited me that slimpsey linen can cover gentle hearts. Almost every one of my fellow boarders had greeted my reappearance with some little token of kindness—a saucer of rare berries, a pile of early green corn, two blooming plants in pots from the metropolis, a lovely new kitten in a brand new tin basin, kitten and basin presented by my nearest neighbour at table, the village tink-er. As each boarder finished his swift repast he widened his passage door-wards so as to include my chair, and said kindly, with deference evidently paid to

my sex and not to any difference of social position, 'How'd'y (*Anglicè*, how do you do?), marm! Hope you're done gone shet o' that there misery in your side.'

But it came to pass that we wearied of our inn. We had eaten so many chickens fried in pork fat and soused with cream, that we shuddered at every cock-crow. We were exhausted with struggles that our bread be cold at least once a day, and that our lettuce be not always dressed with ham gravy. We yearned for coffee unmix'd with scorched barley, and for other than the dampest of brown sugar in our tea. So, when a cot of three rooms, shutterless, cellarless, chimneyless, porchless, treeless, vineless, and well-less, but with soaring Gothico-Italian façade, was offered us for 12*l.* a year, we gladly removed thither. The proprietor added a kitchen, into which one dived down from the main house by means of an immense step; and then, pointing out the town well to the braceleted and ear-ringed maid in calico train and bare feet, who had agreed to serve us for a dollar a week, left us to make or mar our domestic peace as we would. Fortunately we had brought with us various modest elegancies in the way of muslin curtains and pretty table-covers. We bought the cheapest of pine furniture, and I covered as much of it as I could in soft draperies. One of our boxes also held a cheap carpet, large enough to cover all our floors; but whose ingrain glory I am afraid set in neighbouring hearts thrifty shoots of the plant which Casimo de Medici said no man should water. Then we unpacked our books, hung our few pictures, and made believe to be exuberantly happy. Nevertheless there *were* drawbacks to that ex-

uberance, even although in a month after taking possession I had adorned our Tuscan-Gothic façade with a Renaissance portico of pine scantling and wire, covered thickly with wild cucumber and morning glory vines, under which I could sit in the gloaming and forget my chagrin that heaving billows of emerald shut me away from the walls of rose-tinted pearl, the jewelled domes and sparkling spires of a still more western city than ours, in the vigour with which I must defend myself against the mosquitoes. Even though tremulous veils of feathery cypress, and swinging bells of morning glory screened our windows, and the little plot of ground before the front door flamed with honest verbenas, grown valiantly from a single bouquet, though oyster-cans hung from every *coigne d'avantage*, looking like sculptured globes of malachite, with lustrous thick leaves of pendent vines, and though weird, dreamlike music wavered through our rooms with every breath of hot air passing over the æolian harp which I had fastened in one of the windows, there were yet drawbacks besides the worms that devoured our melons and the mosquitoes that devoured us.

One burning midnight every door in the village yawned widely open as usual to entice some possible breath of air to enter. The slaps, bangs, and angry murmurs of the customary warfare had for some time been hushed in our cot, and the field was left clear for our trumpetting foes to glut their bloodthirst upon our exhausted frames. Suddenly, with a shuddering sense of something horrible in the air, I started broad awake. I had heard nothing, seen nothing, felt nothing, yet I was numb with terror. It was

one of those swift spiritual awakenings in which the soul seems to outrun the body in the race towards consciousness, and to be quivering with keen vivid sensation while yet the body is arousing its senses one by one. Whether such awakening is beneath the warning sweep of guardian angel pinion, or from cry of some consciousness left watching while the soul sleeps, let wiser than I say. I only know that I was awake, cold and trembling in the grasp of an unrecognisable horror, some minutes before I was conscious of the outer world. Then I heard a sound, another, and another, each more awful than the last. They were sighs, long, deep, agonised sighs, like dying ones, broken by inarticulate moans, and came from directly under my bed.

My first thought was that S. was dying. But no, from the adjoining room I could hear his calm unconscious breathing. Even as I listened the dreadful moans continued, and I was too paralysed to raise my voice. But—there came a sudden convulsion beneath me that shook my bed, a heavy sound as if some large body struggled and gasped in death. I shrieked—wildly, agonisedly—and in an instant S. was beside me. It was not necessary to explain my cries, for he could hear the sounds as well as I. He stooped and looked under the bed. Then with sudden exclamation he reached under. Another moment and the night air was thrust through and through with wild unearthly clamour, as S. flew frantically across the house in pursuit of the squealing porker, who had broken down our fence in pursuit of a night's lodging.

One torrid afternoon I was sitting upon the floor of our 'fore-room,' packing away the week's table-linen in the seat of the

chintz-covered barrel, which was at once linen-press and armchair. From my position I could see nothing out of doors but a vivid crimson spot just beyond my vine-covered portico, where my adored verbenas waxed strong and blood-hued in the dazzling sunshine. The house was perfectly still, for Amanda had gone for water, and the day itself was as undisturbed in its molten glare as if I were the only living soul in all the broad universe. Not even a dreamlike breath of music came from my æolian harp, and only the soulless locusts whirled their melancholy and eternal wh-r-r-r-r in the heavy-headed prairie-grass. My thoughts were far away in a better land, although an earthly one, and my eyes were dim with tears as I saw the name by which I had once been known, but by which I should be known again never more.

Suddenly, right in the heart of this great, hot, sad silence, I became conscious that all the malachite globes of my oyster-cans were swaying violently to and fro. I could hear the dishes rattling in the china closet (a packing-box on end curtained with muslin) and could feel the floor beneath me heaving like the billows of an angry sea.

'Heavens!' I cried, springing to my feet. 'Have I left home and friends to die like this in a western earthquake?'

The rocking increased, till now our cot seemed almost lifted from the earth and poised upon the brink of an abyss mercifully hidden from my shuddering sight. Just as my terror was at its height, I heard Amanda's voice in fluent yells at the gate. An instant more and the earthquake drifted away in confused uproar out upon the prairie.

'Twan't nothin' but Briggses

hogs, marm, a-scrapin' ther dod-rotted hides agin the underpin-nin'!' screamed Amanda reassuringly in at the door.

Our diet in that prairie village was naturally limited. Fish was, of course, unknown, but chickens figured with satiating frequency upon our table. Everything that could be made with milk, eggs, and sugar was at our command, and we had such vegetables and small fruits as the worms, insects, and chickens left us, which was not much. 'Side-meat,' i.e. fat pork preserved in brine, was the staple viand, one so unacceptable to us that a 'killing day' was a red letter one in our calendar. On such a day I would see unusual commotion up the hill beyond our 'noo deepo.' Our fellow citizens would be rushing excitedly about, each with a lump in his hand, which my practised sight recognised as just-killed veal, occasionally beef, never mutton. In that cellarless iceless hamlet, where the heat-shimmers wimpling over the prairie made one seasick, and the mercury freely disported itself up to 100 in the shade, meat must be consumed at once, or not at all. The frolicsome calf of the dawn, therefore, was often the veal of a score of families at noon, although we always managed to preserve ours, by a preliminary cooking, until night. On such rare days I made a sort of fête. I brought out my finest napery and laid the table myself with such small luxury as I had in the way of silver and china. I even despoiled my adored verbena bed, and robbed the cypress vines of some of their burning stars, sending Amanda out upon the prairie to select the most graceful grasses to mix with them, much to that demoiselle's surprise, her first impression being that we wreathed ourselves with them

and sang a sort of Io-Baccio chorus during our unwonted feast. Then when all was done, the vegetables ready to be 'dished,' the roast crisping in the oven, the custards luke-warming in a basin of tepid water, and S. looked for each moment, Amanda and I would arm ourselves with towels and rage about the 'fore-room' like maniacs escaped from their cage, slapping, banging, till murdered flies lay about us in piles, and the atmosphere was as clear as that of insect-breeding prairies can ever hope to be. Then S. would come in with ever fresh delight at my little banquet, and we would dine, forgetting for a tiny season that 'drawbacks' existed.

One day this programme had been carried out almost to completion. The raging of two maniacs had been performed to the satisfaction of the actresses and the annihilation of most of the audience. I heard S.'s step at the gate. Just then, fancying a peculiar and significant odour from the kitchen, I rushed out to discover the cause. S., too, upon entering, noticed the odour of a few drops of spilled gravy, and dived directly down into the kitchen after me. I opened the oven door and gracefully invited him to 'sniff.' He sniffed once, twice; then sniffed no more! Chaos was let loose in the banquet-hall. Thence came the sound of heavy pounding, then a crash. It sounded as if all the china in the universe, as if the Celestial Empire, the flowery kingdom itself, tottered to its fall, and fell. Into chaos we rushed, to see my pretty fête dissolved like the baseless fabric of a dream, and my best table-cloth disappearing into the horizon like white sail upon trackless sea. 'Ingersoll's colt!' was our rueful trio.

MARGARET BERTHA WRIGHT.

## THE 'SUBLIME' TURK.

At one of those celebrated Saturday evening receptions at Cambridge House, Piccadilly, when Lord Palmerston—that real patriot and upholder of the Englishman's rights—was Prime Minister, a well-known diplomatist, discussing the character of the Turks, remarked to his lordship that nothing practical and solid could be got out of them. They were as polite as Talleyrand, clever as Metternich, and as conciliatory as Sir Hamilton Seymour, but still always seemed to promise what they never intended to perform, postponing the decision of any matter with the everlasting 'Bukra'—to-morrow. 'Well,' replied Lord Palmerston, laughing, 'what can you expect from people who have no heels to their shoes?'

Although the Turks are ruling in Europe, it is mighty difficult to believe that they belong to the same continent as the Englishman, Frenchman, or Russian. When we salute and raise our hats, they touch their heart, lips, and forehead. While we give our overcoats to the hall-porter, they are taking off their shoes. We do our quill-driving at our desks: they sit cross-legged and write on their laps with a reed shaped as a pen, but—bless you!—without a slit; and instead of moving the hand as any other ordinary mortal, the Oriental shifts his paper in the course of his caligraphy! He objects, too, to signing his name, and prefers rather to attach his seal; perhaps in this he is right, as he will avoid then the many temptations to 'do' a little bill.

No one can read the *Arabian Nights* without being charmed with its romances. They have ever had a great fascination, especially for the young. There is a mystery and a spell of enchantment about them. The mouth waters at the luxurious description of fountains in cool courts, soft music, and purses of gold thrown recklessly about like seeds in a garden. And then are we not thrilled by the decided manner in which the Padishah signals for heads to be cut off, or the Ferashes called in to do their little business of bastinado, to say nothing of numberless sacks with their victims floating about in the blue waters of the Bosphorus?

We, living here on the banks of the Thames, in the centre of civilisation, within sound of Big Ben of Westminster, are little inclined to credit the stories of the fatal effects of a cup of coffee, the bastinado, slavery, and physical torture. These things are, however, all in full swing. The ordinary tourist in the East knows next to nothing of its customs. It is only the resident of many years who can speak with confidence of something more than the mere surface of Oriental life. The truth is that much goes on within the walls of a harem or palace which is terribly secret and mysterious. Yes, mystery and secrecy. These two words are the pivots upon which everything is worked; and the capital, Constantinople, to its shame, knows as much as any other city in the East about such matters. Barring decapitation, most of the enormi-



ties are now committed just as they were a hundred years ago.

When Sultan Abdul Medjid, brother of Abdul Aziz, came to the throne, the amiable monster (who, by the bye, drank six bottles of champagne daily, the last bottle being drugged) had his five brothers bowstrung before his eyes. It was dangerous to have so many male heirs to the succession: they might become inconvenient members of the dynasty, and so it was better to crush at once all chances of a conspiracy against the throne. Only quite lately the succession law was repealed, which required the destruction of every male child of the Sultan's sisters and daughters. What a sad and touching story was that of the 'two little tombs with two little red fezzes' described by Thackeray in visiting the Mausoleum; these were the tombs of Abdul Medjid's nephews, the children of his sister, who were slain with the bowstring. Sultan Mahmoud strangled the one, but having sympathy for the agony of the poor mother, his daughter, the royal heart relented. He then promised that in the event of her having another male child, it should be allowed to live. Mahmoud died, and Abdul Medjid succeeded. His sister bore another son, and, depending on her royal brother's affection for her, hoped that this infant would be spared. What happened? He tore the infant from its mother's bosom and killed it. The poor woman's heart broke, and on her death-bed she sent for her heartless brother and cursed him as a perjurer and assassin. She lies now by the 'two little fezzes.' This story brings us to the Suleimanic mausoleum. There you can see the tombs of the seventeen brothers whom Sultan Mahomet III. strangled in a fit of

jealousy; but this little event certainly occurred some time ago, and in barbarous times. Ah, barbarous times, indeed! The Oriental code of punishments is a trifle more civilised than of yore. They do not now thrust people into ovens filled with spikes and knives, and heat them gradually, nor do they hang up their mothers by the heels to make them confess where the money is concealed.

Of all Eastern customs and habits, how little is known of the inner life of the Sultan, of his ways of living, of the harems as owned by the rich pashas, and of the dominant influence of Prince Backsheesh.

'Behind the lofty garden-wall,

Where stranger face can ne'er sur-  
prise—

That inner world her all-in-all—

The Eastern woman lives and dies.'

Owing to the nature of the institution our knowledge of harem life is entirely derived from the visits of European ladies. The Turkish authorities, it must be confessed, are very amiable in this respect, and little difficulty is experienced when the introductions are good. The Turk is commonly believed to be a sort of Bluebeard. It is not so. Polygamy is not the rule, but the exception. The lower classes never have more than one wife; and it is only in the case of wealthy pashas that there are three or four wives, the latter number being legally allowed to every Mussulman according to the Koran; this is exclusive of almost any number of slaves and concubines. The husband must have no acquaintance, however slight, with women other than those of his own harem; and should he observe slippers outside of the harem door, he knows that ladies are visiting, and therefore cannot enter his own house. Then, again,

if perchance he strolls through the bazaar, there must be no recognition of any of his own women, although they may be throwing away his money right and left in a most lavish way on silks and jewels. He must not say a word, and so strokes his beard and passes on with an 'Inshallah' (Please God), or 'Allah Kerim' (God is great and merciful); for now he knows only too well how the money goes! European ladies are the objects of much attention and curiosity on the part of the women of a harem. Their dresses are felt, they are pawed all over, and asked childish questions incessantly; for it must be remembered that a large harem consists of wives and domestic slaves, the latter counted by hundreds.

A young English lady, seventeen years old, of great personal attractions and engaging manners, some time back visited a harem accompanied by her mother and friends. The women questioned her, and would not believe that she had 'no children, or even a husband.' One of the wives, who took a great fancy to her, threw her arms round her neck, and entreated her to stay with them for ever. She could have any husband she liked, and even was so kind as to especially recommend *her own*, adding that she was sure he would soon want another wife, and that she, the real wife, would much rather it was this nice English girl, as then there would always be the pleasure of having her as a friend and companion. Here was a most decided offer. A firm refusal, however, of these honours caused much surprise and disappointment.

Turkish ladies are very illiterate, and in very few cases are able to read even a French novel. They live a very quiet and happy

life on the whole; much of their time being taken up with visits, excursions to the Sweet Waters, and dressing. It is asked, 'Well, what about marriage; there must be weddings, wives, and families?' True; but, as in other things, they have their own peculiar mode. The process of courtship is unknown among them. The matrimonial negotiation is carried on by a woman of mature age, or by the mothers on both sides, who arrange a marriage by visiting some desirable young lady at the baths. They chat and expatiate on the good looks and accomplishments of the young man proposed, and all is done. The *fiancé* never sees his wife until she lifts her veil in the bridal apartments. The lady is often more fortunate, as she takes care to have a look at the gentleman through the small apertures of the latticed window, or in some other manner, when he least expects it. The Turkish ladies are fond of giving entertainments, especially a cake party, called 'chalva.' On arrival at the hostess's quarters, escorted by slaves and eunuchs, they salute each other gracefully by touching lips and forehead. They will then gossip quietly, and compare notes as to their dresses, jewels, &c.; and if the harem be a distinguished one, dancing girls are hired to perform with castanets and tambourines, and thus time is whiled away. The signal for the 'order of going' is given by clapping of hands and ordering in the 'chalva,' which is rich and luscious, something like our trifle cake. At some of our dull and dreary entertainments in Belgravia and Tyburnia, we might well take a hint from this Eastern lady, especially as she invariably bids adieu to her friends with the remark, 'I am so glad

it's all over,' not intending to be rude, but simply congratulating herself that the little party has gone off to her entire satisfaction. Rumour has it that the harem walls conceal terrible secrets; that trap-doors communicate with the blue Bosphorus; and that mysterious proceedings go on under cover of darkness.

The eunuch is a great personage in the harem or palace. His power is almost absolute. There is no limit to his control. The chief eunuch in a palace is styled Kishlar Agaci; he is black, and takes the position of the second man of the Empire, ranking with the Grand Vizier. He is captain of the girls. If they are insubordinate he does not mince matters, but chastises them with rods on the bare body. Should the matter, however, be a very serious one, they are *disposed of*! These black eunuchs are hideous ungainly fellows, generally with short necks and long legs; they are very haughty and overbearing in their demeanour, and when escorting their charges on excursions slash about with their 'coubatch' or whip indiscriminately, to clear the way for the pets of the Padishah. They enjoy princely salaries; and the large fortunes amassed by them result mainly from backsheesh screwed out of the inmates of the harem. It is from this class of Orientals that the mutes are selected. Mutes are still employed by the Sultan in his palaces as guards and attendants; and especially are their negative services availed of at the 'Porte,' where all official business and diplomatic interviews are carried on. The mutes (we are not talking of the *Arabian Nights* and their fanciful stories, but in sober earnest as to what is happening at the present hour) are selected from the eunuchs, and when very

young have *their tongues cut out*, and every means devised to keep them in a state of ignorance, as they are not even taught to read and write. The eunuchs are also turned to further account. When a Grand Vizier is to be deposed, or some other person in high office to be dismissed, such matters are generally carried through with expedition. The officer whose duty it is to undertake this important mission is termed 'Black Ears.' It is for him only to notify the Grand Vizier that his power is at an end; he appears suddenly, always at midnight, and without any kind of warning. He receives for this errand an enormous amount of backsheesh. In former days it was his privilege and duty to strangle then and there the Grand Vizier or high functionary, whoever he might be. But things are more mercifully managed now, and the victim is smuggled on board the Sultan's steam-yacht, the Izzedin, to some distant point in Arabia or Asia Minor, and most probably the Ministerial career is terminated by the simple process of administering a cup of 'mocha.'

The Sultan never marries. The mothers of his children are styled Sultanas, and have separate establishments; but as they have been slaves they are not permitted to sit at table with their own children, although these very children are princes and princesses. His Majesty Abdul Hamid has only four children, and all by one wife; but even she dares not sit down in presence of the Sultan's mother, but must stand before her deferentially. The mother of a reigning Sultan—the Queen-Mother or Sultana Valideh, as she is called—is the first lady in the empire, and always treated with great

ceremony. She has unlimited influence. Her position is unique, and her power in the affairs of the State is as great as that of the Grand Vizier himself; often, indeed, the appointment of the latter is to be attributed to her intrigue and *finesse*. The Sultana Valideh is at the bottom of every scheme, and dominates her sovereign son to such an extent that every pasha courts her favour. A great scandal and an amusing scene took place when the Empress Eugénie visited Constantinople a few years back. Being anxious to recognise all the kindnesses and attention paid to her, her Majesty at a farewell interview actually kissed the Valideh on the cheek, looking upon her in the light of a sister sovereign. The Queen-Mother was much excited, and flew into a towering passion. Here was a direct insult from a *giaour*. She took to her bed, refused food for four-and-twenty hours, and had several baths before she could consider herself purged of this enormity, this terrible stain; and this old bigot, probably herself born of a slave, thought herself too good, forsooth, to be saluted by the beautiful Eugénie, consort of one of the most powerful emperors of the continent of Europe.

The Turkish gentleman is amiable, and has a good heart, and that means good manners ready made. Like the Spaniard, he, with his *bonhomie*, offers everything that he has. You admire his jewelled pipes: 'They are yours, Effendi.' You praise his horses or his *konak*—all is at your disposal. Even in the lowest classes their innate courtesy is most remarkable. The Turk is much given to hospitality, and will go great lengths; but yet is shrewd enough not to be

imposed upon, and can show that he is not a man to be fooled. Touching this, a story is told by that best of *raconteurs*, Mr. Ralston. A peasant presented a pasha with a hare, which in due course was converted into soup. Soon the peasant called, and was well treated. A little later came several neighbours of the man who had given the hare; they also received a 'square' meal. But by and by more visitors came claiming hospitality, saying that they were neighbours of the neighbour of the man who had given the hare. The pasha was now excited, and put his foot down. All they got was a glass of water each, with the remark that it was 'the sauce of the sauce of the hare.'

One word about the slaves. Although the public slave-market has been abolished since the time of the Crimean War and the trade is now contraband, the system of providing them is carried on with the greatest ease, and winked at by the authorities. So long as there are harems, so long must these establishments be supplied. The merchants bring them from Circassia, Georgia, and from Tripoli. Those from Circassia fetch the highest price, and it is generally from this race that a sultan's wife is chosen. At certain seasons whole caravans arrive, and the pick of them will be handed over to some high Turkish lady who makes a business of the matter, and acts as intermediary. She trains and educates the girls, and at the fitting time makes her bargain. A handsome Circassian will fetch 150*l.*, and when thoroughly educated 200*l.* may easily be asked and obtained. It should be stated that the slaves in Turkey are very kindly treated, and on the whole their lot is a happy one.

Admitting the necessity of being liberal with your 'tips' when requiring information in foreign countries, nowhere are you so plundered as in the East; for it is not too much to say that the actual ruler of Turkey is Prince *Backsheesh*. The following will give some idea of the torments he puts you to. A traveller recently related his experiences as a candidate for a concession from the Porte for an important company which was to give a good slice of revenue to the Turkish Government, at the same time proving highly profitable to the company concerned. In his numerous visits to the Porte—the Turkish Whitehall or Downing-street—he had to give backsheesh all round to door-keepers, hangers-on, mutes, military officers in full uniform, to the 'yekil,' an official whose duty it was to introduce him on the several occasions to the pasha or minister, and not forgetting a round sum to the tune of three or four thousand pounds to the pasha himself. Then, after all this had been done, his scheme must go before the Council of State. *They* had to be 'squared.' The whole proceeding being Turkish, a delay of course occurred. After having spent some thousands of pounds, he was told that if he really expected to do any good at all he must go in for palace intrigue, and bribe the chief eunuch or coffee-bearer, or both, or whoever had the ear of the Sultan. He did all this as recommended; got the greedy pasha (the only obstacle to his scheme) appointed to high office,

and the Sultan immediately passed his iradé. The company was floated forthwith. The total amount of backsheesh levied was the trifling sum of fifteen thousand pounds, and the negotiator was complimented by every one in Constantinople for having carried the affair through so quickly and so economically!

The only safeguard for the Turkish Empire, we venture to say, is to be found in the single word 'reform.' This alone will prevent it crumbling to pieces, ay, and rapidly too. Will the Turk ever reform? Socially no real improvement will ever take place until corruption and bribery are trampled on, and the condition and status of the women considered. That is to say, reform means annihilating 'backsheesh' and the institution of the harems. Abolish slavery, and there is no longer any *raison d'être* for a harem. The mistresses cannot live a secluded life if the subordinates are free; for in that case the privacy of the harem will have vanished. Politically speaking, surely some clever and enterprising Turkish patriot, like Fuad or Ali Pasha, will rise up and regenerate their country. With such a soil and climate as Turkey is blessed—with such illimitable resources, what could not be done! But the root of all the evil in the Government of Turkey is bribery. Once depose Prince Backsheesh and raise the standard of their women, we shall see the Turks fairly on the road pointing to reform and a sound administration. But not until then. *Chi vivra vedrà.*

EDWARD DRURY.

## LADY BEAUTY.

Book the Fifth.

LADY BEAUTY'S SORROW.

### CHAPTER I.

WHICH DISPLAYS SOPHIA IN A CHARACTER THAT MAKES A BEAUTIFUL WOMAN  
BEAUTIFUL INDEED.

THREE weary hours dragged by that night before tired Sophia fell asleep, and sleep had no sooner closed her eyelids than she was aroused. A low intense whisper, which even in the moment of wakening she felt to be charged with terror, broke her short slumber.

'Sophia! Sophia!' she heard her mother uttering in her ear.

Wide awake in an instant, and alarmed by the way in which her mother spoke, she sat up in bed. Mrs. Temple was standing beside her in her night-dress, and, by the dim light of the lamp which burned in her room, she saw that the old woman's face was almost lifeless from its expression of intense alarm.

'Mamma! mamma!' she cried out. 'What is the matter?'

'Hush! hush!' the mother answered, motioning her not to speak so loud. 'If we are heard we shall be killed.'

'What is the matter?' Sophia asked again, now almost as terrified as her mother.

'There are robbers in the house,' Mrs. Temple answered, gasping for utterance. 'Come here—softly.'

She motioned Sophia to the door, and, stepping out on the landing, bid her listen. All was dark and still, and for a moment Sophia either heard or thought she heard her mother's heart thumping against her side. But the house was perfectly silent.

'It's nothing, mamma,' Sophia said at last, beginning to speak in her natural voice. 'You made a mistake.'

'Hush!' the mother cried, in the same terrified whisper as before. 'I heard them in the house. I tried to ring the bell in my room, and I find it won't work. It was quite right yesterday. This is a planned robbery. The servants are in it; we shall be killed, Sophia, murdered. O, what shall I do?'

And now, indeed, Sophia, straining her ears to listen, did hear a strange sound below-stairs, and, bending over the balustrade, she plainly saw one gleam of light hastily vanishing, as if a lantern had for an instant been turned in the wrong direction. Nearly dead with fear she listened again, and soon after sounds



in the entrance-hall, as if a heavy box were being cautiously moved, convinced her that her mother was not wrong. She took the old woman's shaking hand and led her back to her own room.

'We must try my bell, mamma; we must ring that. The noise will frighten them.'

'Try it, try it!' the mother answered. She could hardly articulate, and the words came from between her motionless lips as if she had not uttered them.

But when Sophia tried her own bell the result was simply that the wires pulled lightly and no sound was made. These, too, had been put out of order.

'I knew it!' the old woman gasped. 'The servants are in it. We shall both be murdered here, in this room.'

And in truth the position was frightful enough. Their windows overlooked the garden, and to open these and cry for help would have been not only vain, but would have added danger to danger. Mrs. Temple had sunk upon the bed, and in the paralysis of terror seemed to be losing consciousness; and Sophia, although she tried to keep her senses, felt as if she herself would swoon away.

'There is nothing to be done,' the old woman said. 'We must wait till they come and kill us. O Sophia, Sophia! can't you do anything to save me?'

It was surprising to see how utterly prostrated with fear the active energetic woman had become in a few moments. And Sophia, the quiet and delicate girl, was even now growing more collected. She remembered that the former owner of the house had erected in one wing a kind of belfry, with a bell of sonorous tongue hanging in it; for he was a nervous householder, dwelling in fear of thieves. The girls knew this belfry—so they called it—well, and had more than once rung the bell in the daytime in sport; and now Sophia thought that if she were only there, she might easily raise such an alarm as would effectually frighten away the robbers. But how to reach the belfry? The only way was across the very hall where the robbers were now at work. Sophia could not make up her mind to go even a step down the stairs; and as to consulting her mother in her present paralysed state, that was altogether useless. She stood irresolute, herself almost losing her senses with fear, but neither moving nor speaking until the old woman called out again,

'Sophia, Sophia! can't you do anything to save me?'

This appeal had a wholesome effect. Nerving herself by an almost superhuman effort, the brave girl replied,

'I will try, mamma; but you must stay here.'

'Not alone, Sophia,' she answered. 'I dare not stay alone. You shall not leave me.'

'I must, mamma,' she replied. 'I must leave you. You can lock your door behind you. I don't think they will come up-stairs. Quick; follow me and lock the door.'

She stole out, and her mother rose up and went after her. Just as she was going out the old woman caught her hand again.

'Sophia, you must not leave me; I shall die before you come back.'

'Lock the door,' Sophia whispered again. And her mother heard her; for, as she stole into the dark passage, the door was softly shut upon her, and the key was turned.

It was a truly frightful situation for the girl. Nearly mad as she was with fear, she yet gathered up courage—how she knew not—to steal a few steps down-stairs. And now the noises in the hall were quite audible, and again she was just about to fly back, and take her chance in her own room with her mother. Just at this juncture a little bit of courage seemed to kindle in her breast, and she waited a moment, and then stole three steps down-stairs. Here, at the turning, she saw plainly that there was light in the hall; and somehow the sense that she was in the darkness and the robbers in the light gave her a sensation of returning security. She listened, trembled, and then with shaking limbs ventured three steps down the second flight. She could distinctly hear the burglars talking, and as one of them gave a low brutal laugh she shuddered to think what wretches were near. Sophia always declared that the next few steps she took unconsciously, and that she only knew herself when she found she was peering from the dark angle of the stairs into the hall.

Three men were there. It was evident that they had mistaken an old oak chest which stood against the wall for a depository of valuables, and this they were now trying to force open. They were quite occupied for the moment, and from her dark angle Sophia could plainly observe their movements. It was curious that now, when fear might altogether have overcome her, she began to feel a renewal of courage. She looked across the dark hall to the passage on the other side which she wished to reach, and she resolved while the robbers were still engaged upon the chest to make a dart across. Several seconds she waited, until she saw an opportunity, and, while the men were trying to force the oaken lid, she flew across the hall, and was in the passage on the other side, hidden from view.

But now, as she slowly groped her way along the passage, a new terror arose. What if the belfry-door should be locked? The room was never used, and it might well be that the key had been taken away. The bare idea so terrified her that she scarce dared to creep to the door, lest her fear should be verified. But

there was no returning, and the next moment she felt the door, and finding the handle she turned it slowly, and to her unspeakable joy the door opened at her touch. O, what a rush of relief she felt! Her position might still be perilous; but the greatest danger was past. She crept round the wall, feeling her way until her hands touched the bell-rope; and then, drawing a breath for the effort, she pulled hard and fast, and immediately the iron tongue outside began to answer her back in tones that seemed to



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tell that she was once again in communication with the honest world outside, and need fear no more. Stroke after stroke the bell sent its resonant alarm out upon the midnight; and at each note Sophia tugged with fresh energy, and the faithful bell above seemed to grow more vehement as she with gathering strength applied to it for help.

## CHAPTER II.

A VERY SHORT CHAPTER; BUT IN IT THERE MEET THE BROOK AND THE RIVER  
OF THIS STORY.

THIS passage, the only morsel of sensation in our boudoir story, has been dismissed as rapidly as was possible. Indeed,

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it would never have been told at all, had it not been a link in the chain of incident on which the history depends.

Of course all Kettlewell applauded our Sophia. Her midnight descent, her flight across the hall, her plucky behaviour at the bell-rope,—everything she had done was praised. The burglars fled at the first peal, but Sophia kept on ringing until all the neighbours were aroused ; and then such a congregation of servants and others had gathered in the house and grounds that fear was not to be thought of. All of us applauded her quickness of thought about the belfry ; the only person who spoke in anything like a qualified tone being Egerton, who remarked that he was far from wishing to cast any slur on Sophia, but still he must say that she would have made a great deal more noise if she had used the Chinese gong which stood in the hall. For sounding an alarm, Egerton said, there was nothing like a Chinese gong. Sophia, in the gentlest way, but with laughter trembling on her lips, pointed out that the gong stood just where the robbers were working ; upon which Egerton retorted that he had not said anything about where it stood, but only that for sounding an alarm there was nothing like a Chinese gong.

Now how would you expect the little mother to have acted ? To have denied her own abject terror, and attenuated Sophia's bravery ? She did nothing of the kind.

'I was dead with fear,' she said, in her gay way. 'Courage is not one of my virtues. I could no more have gone down those stairs and past those dreadful men than I could raise that piano with my finger. Deuce take my heart'—sometimes, in her easy moods, she would let fly an expression of this sort—'I thought it would never beat again ! And Sophia was as cool as if she were going down to see a visitor. Sophia ought to be a soldier's wife : she ought to be a soldier herself. Few women would have acted as she did that night. Really I would not have believed she had it in her.'

One happy result for the poor girl was that her mother's wrath was not so much appeased as effaced. The whole Prendergast incident was for the time forgotten ; and when Mrs. Barbara Temple's mind reverted to the matter, she admitted to herself that in charging Sophia with weakness she made a great mistake. She still deplored the issue of the affair, but she never again reproached her daughter, and she even made one or two indirect apologies for her severity of speech, and these we may be sure Sophia was only too willing to accept.

And now there began quite an era in Sophia's life. Her lover was absent, and they were not allowed to communicate with each other, for on this point Mrs. Temple never relaxed. She was not formally engaged ; indeed, she was understood to be

open to an offer—a fact which her mother, still following her original policy, took care to publish abroad. Caroline and Sibyl now fully agreed with their mother that Sophia was acting recklessly in allowing the freshness of her youth to pass away under this blighting romantic spell. And all this time, only by the merest chance, seldom—perhaps never—could she hear anything of Percival Brent. He might be untrue; and even then, according to the words of their agreement, she could not reproach him with inconstancy. It was a trying time for her; but during this period her character was formed, and she who on her fiftieth birthday was with general consent and delight styled ‘Lady Beauty’ learned her secret of charming in this period of anxiety and waiting, when her constancy and her patience were so severely tried. I here relate the main incidents of this uneventful period, and having at the same time tried by touches here and there to give you an idea of the maturity of charms towards which Time was bearing our dear heroine, I shall be able in my next book to tell you how it all ended: whether Percival was true or false; whether or not happiness of the kind she expected rewarded the constancy of her pure, glowing, and yet never impatient affection.

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### CHAPTER III.

IN WHICH THE WEALTHY MRS. BARBARA TEMPLE DISCOVERS SYMPTOMS OF BANKRUPTCY.

DURING the weeks that immediately followed, Sophia observed that her mother was very often thoughtful, and would talk to herself, nod her head, shake it, frown, and make a number of those signs which denote that we are thinking hard and reasoning with ourselves. She never dropped the smallest allusion to Prendergast, and Sophia, glad of the opportunity, seized the favourable moments, and showered caresses and attentions upon her mother, which the mother for her part received with every mark of satisfaction. Thus the time, which, had it fulfilled Sophia’s expectations, would have been one long scene of reproaches and regrets, did as a matter of fact glide easily and pleasantly by, giving another illustration of that great common truth, that if we only wait until our troubles actually come they will often turn out no troubles at all. Sophia, however, wondered what the moot case could be that her mother so pondered and argued with herself.

‘Sophy,’ the little woman said one morning at breakfast, ‘this house is too large for us. I shall give it up, and rent a small one rather nearer the town. Our lease expires in September, and I don’t fancy another winter in this lonely place.’

So this had been the matter of internal debate. Sophia was

not at all surprised to find that her mother was giving up the Beeches, for the burglary was a sufficient reason; but when the old woman began to talk of reasons of economy, she concluded that, ashamed to confess to fear, she was excusing her flight by alleging pecuniary motives. Sophia, however, soon found that there was more in the matter than she had imagined.

'I shall keep one carriage in future, no more,' Mrs. Temple said a few days after. 'One carriage, one horse, and one manservant. Quite enough for us two.'

'Mamma,' Sophia cried, 'the idea of you trotting about in a little brougham with one horse! How funny you will feel!'

'Not at all, dear, so long as the carriage is neat and the horse what a horse should be. Quite enough for us, Sophy. More seems affectation; just like those Dones. Horrid people, with a fresh carriage for every day in the week—and such horses! It strikes me that whenever a vulgarian makes money and retires, being of no family himself, he resolves to have horses with a pedigree. No, no, Sophy; we shall not lose anything by living quietly. Leave that to me, dear; you may safely leave that to me.'

Great was the astonishment of Kettlewell. Not that we wondered at Mrs. Temple giving up the Beeches: with us, as with Sophia, the burglary was a sufficient reason for that. But when she chose a small box of a villa near the entrance of the town, and put down two of her carriages, dismissed five of her servants, and in a general way reduced her expenditure by more than one half, we were surprised indeed. Had Sophia been married the affair would have been intelligible; but who, for any motive except necessity, ever heard of a match-making mother lowering her mode of living until all her daughters were settled? There was a great deal of talk in Kettlewell, and a great deal of whispering. Had Mrs. Temple been living beyond her means? Had she made some bad speculation? Was this only the prelude to a final crash? All these questions were asked freely, and most of us had some surmise to make; but nobody quite agreed with anybody else except in one point—Mrs. Temple was not the woman to retrench without urgent reason; and after all, the most likely reason was that she had not the money to maintain her original grandeur. One spiteful lady friend congratulated her ironically behind her back on having married two daughters well, at all events, and said that even if the mother died a bankrupt, dear Sophia would always have a comfortable home with her sisters.

Car and Sibyl were as much amazed as the rest, and, not daring to inquire of their mother, they beset Sophia with questions which she was unable to answer. Sibyl was especially



searching for reasons why, her husband having directed her mind to the subject in his elephantine way.

'It is not for us,' he said, pausing as he stirred his coffee—for they were at breakfast—it is not for us to ask questions, but still your mother's conduct is unaccountable. If you could find out whether she has been speculating, or if her affairs are involved, I might interfere with advantage—to your mother.'

Goldmore, as he said this, cleared his throat and shifted his chin between his shirt-collar in an imposing way. The chin was very well shaved, and the shirt-collar very white and stiff, as is invariably the case with millionaires in the morning.

'I might advise with your mother,' the great man added, seeing that his wife did not speak, 'and tender her my aid.'

Sibyl was really alarmed at this suggestion from her husband, who, as she well knew, was neither a meddler nor one who formed his opinions hastily. She hurried off to Sophia and declared her misgivings; and all Sophia could say was that there seemed good reason for fearing that something was wrong. But, Sophia added, she had already tried every possible means to find out her mother's actual position and motives, and had entirely failed.

'In that case,' Archibald Goldmore said, when his wife reported this result to him, 'I shall call upon your mother myself, and introduce the subject. It is my duty to offer her my counsel. What can she know about business?'

And he called upon little Mrs. Barbara, who received him with her usual cheerfulness. Goldmore was a favourite with her in his way.

'You know me well enough to be quite sure that I am no "Paul Pry,"' the millionaire said. He seemed to think that there was magnanimity in his very mention of that character in connection with himself. "'I hope I don't intrude" is not often on my lips, for this simple reason—I *know* I don't intrude.'

Little Mrs. Temple gave him a brisk nod and smile, and he proceeded, approaching his subject with slow dignity, as if he were driving the Lord Mayor's coach round a ticklish corner.

'We have been a little surprised—Sibyl and myself—at the great change you have made in your household; and knowing as we do your sound common sense, we are sure there is a good reason for it. It is a great change,' he added, looking round the small drawing-room, 'although you have displayed your usual good taste here from—from—floor to ceiling.'

'Yes,' Mrs. Temple replied unconcernedly, 'it is a nice little house.'

'This has been a bad time for investments,' Goldmore remarked, resolved to keep near his real business, 'and expenses are very

heavy. I have sometimes thought how little I imagined when I first married how costly my establishment would be.' The old rogue lived to the full a third within his income. 'I am sometimes frightened at expenditure, Mrs. Temple.'

'Are you?' she remarked. 'Now, I never am!'

'I am glad to hear it,' he answered. 'To tell you the truth, I was afraid that you might have found your own expenses a little in excess of your calculations; and to be quite plain with you, I came this morning to know if there is any business you would like to talk over with me. I know,' Goldmore said, with the modesty of a monarch, 'something about affairs. Now can I be of any use to you? Can my knowledge of—the money market'—this being a joke he laughed a little—'be of any use to you?'

'Not any, Archibald,' she said. 'I always manage my own business.'

'There is no difficulty I can clear up?'

'All my business is straightforward and intelligible.'

'Then,' said the baffled inquirer, 'it only remains for me to say that I hope you do not consider my visit and my offer at all impertinent?'

'Quite the contrary, Archibald,' she cried vivaciously. 'Kind, most kind. No one in the world I would sooner have consulted if I had wanted advice. But I don't want advice, Archibald.'

So Archibald Goldmore went home as wise as he came; and when his wife met him in the avenue, and asked him if he knew everything, it was with some slight vexation he replied that he knew nothing.

'But I have my fears,' he said; 'and very grave fears. However,' he added, seeing his wife's face fall, 'don't be alarmed. If anything happens, we shall see what can be done.' He spoke like a financial pillar: there could be no dreadful crash in the family so long as he stood unshaken.

Egerton and Caroline talked the matter over too; and Egerton said at once that his mother-in-law was going out of her mind; and deeming it his duty to prepare Sophia for the worst,

'I have noticed this coming on for months,' he said to her, while she could scarcely look him in the face for laughter. 'There have been many symptoms which I have been watching. I would not be frightened, Sophia—being frightened never does any good—but still, if I were you, I should sleep with a strait-waistcoat under my pillow, and then, if anything sudden happened, you could clap it on. Forewarned is forearmed, Sophia.'

Thus both within the family circle and outside it the affairs of Mrs. Temple were discussed with great assiduity; but relatives, friends, and acquaintances were alike left in the dark.

The ordinary set of people talked the matter over, wondered, surmised, and then forgot all about it. But the family could not so lightly dismiss a doubt which concerned their own interests; and in the family the whispered belief was that the little mother, for all her shrewdness, had run into extravagance, and that poverty was now forcing her to retrench. Then came questions: What is her position now? From what source comes her income? What will Sophia have when she dies? And these misgivings were the more anxious, because it was already known that a portion of her property at least would at her death go to her first husband's heir.

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#### CHAPTER IV.

IN WHICH SOPHIA MAKES LOVE BY DEPUTY, AND THE REV. ANTHONY BRENT CEASES TO BE RECTOR OF KETTLEWELL.

WITH all her seriousness Sophia had never been what we call an ecclesiastical girl. The modern fashion of church decoration, and other customs of reverence and taste in religion, had not at that time fairly arisen; but ladies were even then very active in church work. From this Sophia had always held aloof, greatly to the surprise of successive clergymen, who had marked her as likely to be useful in their parishes. To repeated invitations that she would become a district visitor or Sunday-school teacher, Sophia had always answered no; and she had never given any reason for this refusal. Whether she liked dancing, and feared that her pleasure might be restricted, or what may have been her reason, I cannot guess. Even when our Rector tried to persuade her to help him, her answer was still a simple no; nor could the merry little clergyman by any semi-jocose questioning extract from her a syllable more. He turned about and tried gravity and serious remonstrance; but with no better result. Accordingly Mr. Brent was somewhat surprised when, about six months after his son's departure, Sophia asked him if she could be of any use to him in the parish or the Sunday-school. Of course he accepted her offer gladly. And a capital teacher and punctual visitor he found her. But Mr. Brent noticed that at their various little meetings Sophia would manage to linger until the other ladies were gone; then she would talk a bit, and somehow the talk always veered about till it settled on Percival, when Sophia would ask a few questions and be gone. Even little Mr. Brent, who was not an observer of things, sometimes felt that these two or three sentences about Percival were with Sophia the business of the day. At an earlier period of his career he would have broken many a jest upon this discovery; but jests were by-gones with our poor Rector. The twinkle had fallen from his eye, and the blitheness had sunk out of his tone. A pallor was stealing over his face, and he was fast turning

gray. As one of his parishioners who made her living by laundry-work said, 'He looked like a gown that had been to the wash : ' the colours had run ; what remained was himself and not himself.

And now, disregarding for a moment our small chronology, let me dismiss the Rector from this tale, where, indeed, he has little more to do. Poor Sophia clung to him more than most of his parishioners, and she found a real pleasure in his society, because it seemed to be a kind of remote contact with Percival. The bedroom where Percival had slept from boyhood was in that house. The books he had read were on the shelves. Here he used to sit at dinner. There was the garden-walk where he was wont to saunter with his pipe. She knew the very peg



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where his hat used to hang. Somehow he did not seem quite so far away when she was in the precincts of his own home ; and the Rector's dispirited talk had a certain liveliness for her, because he was Percival's father. Occasionally, too, she would get a glimpse at her absent lad himself. For instance, one day, as they were walking together to the garden-gate, the Rector said, ' Percy planted that rose.'

Next week, as they went the same way, Sophia stopped beside the rose-tree to pluck off a few withered leaves, and make the plant look trim. Mr. Brent, stopping with her, said in his abstracted way,

' I never told you ; Percival planted that rose.'

He never told her ! Why, by that time she knew how many leaves were on it, and could spell its name and knew its pros-

pect of life, having become for Percival's sake a perfect horticultural actuary.

Then another day the Rector said listlessly—for he never joked with her about his son, and indeed seemed to have only a faint remembrance of that connection—

‘I heard from Percy this morning; would you care to hear his letter?’

Sophia, who would have lived on bread and water for a week rather than miss one line her darling wrote, said, trying with miserable affectation to imitate the Rector's apathetic tone,



See p. 485.

‘Yes, if it is not troubling you.’

‘Perhaps,’ Mr. Brent said, ‘as you don't seem greatly to care for it, we need not read this one, but wait for the next.’

He said this quite innocently, but he put Sophia in a dreadful fix. With the instinct of true generalship, however, she resolved to recover her lost position by a bold stroke.

‘I would not miss hearing it for the world,’ she said audaciously. ‘O, do read it!’

And the Rector, looking up with a faint smile, like a man who remembers something, took the letter out and read it through.

In none of these letters did Percy mention her name, until

three years after his departure, when one day the Rector read this line: '*If you ever see the girl who was once my little Sophia, give her my love.*'

He read it mechanically, as he did everything now; then, holding the letter with loose fingers, it slipped from him and skimmed down under the table, and presently he was called from the room. Sophia dropped on her knees and caught the sheet up, and read the line again:

*'If ever you see the girl who was once my little Sophia, give her my love.'*

Bless me, how she kissed that sheet! It got all the love-kisses that had been ripening on her lips for six-and-thirty months. Had it been the age of transformation, that sheet would surely have turned into a lover under the transmuting power of those kisses. And then Miss Sophia, who had a terribly tender conscience of her own, looked at the letter, and coloured up at a certain suggestion of her own mind, and wondered would it be very wrong, and would the Rector ever find it out, and was it very mean of her to do it in the hope that he never would find it out? And, deciding on action, she nicely tore off the finest little morsel of the paper, where on the last line these precious words were inscribed; and she slipped the shred into her watch-case, where she could look at it night and morning. *The little girl that was my Sophia.* 'That is! that shall be! until you bid her cease!' she said a thousand times, as if that morsel of paper were his living spokesman. Truly the girl was very much in love, and absence made her heart grow fonder, which is not usual with either male or female hearts, unless I see the world wrongly altogether.

About this time Sophia—and not Sophia only, but all of us—began to notice that Mr. Brent looked paler than usual, walked with a slight drag of the right foot, and sometimes missed a word out of a sentence without being aware of it. Again, he would observe the mistake, and correct it with an appearance of irritation. 'Brain mischief going on,' old Sparker whispered. And he was right; for one Sunday evening, after preaching, the Rector suddenly became speechless in the vestry, and lost his power of motion. He never spoke a syllable again; and even when he opened his eyes there was no reason in them. A dreadful storm of wind and rain came on that night, and blew the golden cock from off the church steeple, and some of the masonry with it. The tempest raged round the Rectory garden, and uprooted two great elm-trees, and cast them across the lawn in gigantic ruin. Meanwhile the Rector lay as quiet as if a summer breeze was blowing. There was no storm that could roar loud enough to disturb his sleep. And in the morning, when we



awoke to see what the wind had done in our gardens and parks, we heard our kind-hearted little Rector had departed from us for ever, just while the storm was uttering its fiercest blast.

We said that we could have better spared a better man, looked grave a moment, remarked how uncertain life is, and then talked of the storm, and forgot the Rector. But to Sophia his death was a terrible sorrow. Somehow Percival seemed gone; she would hear no more about him, nor have the remote but still very actual comfort of talking with his father and seeing his old haunts. She had borne trials already, and other trials awaited her; but this was, after all, one of the sorest she ever felt. She grew lonely, sad, doubting; began to think Percy would forget her; tried valiantly to battle with her fears; cried many hours when she was alone, then wiped her eyes and went down-stairs smiling; but it was an aching heart that beat in her breast. And the body of the Rector was laid to sleep in the churchyard; and his successor came. The king was dead, and the cry was 'Long live the king!' for we were all pleased with our new parson. He preached sermons shorter by five minutes than those of Mr. Brent. He kept two curates, good-looking bachelors. He worked the parish well. So we confessed every one that the loss of poor Brent was gain to us; especially these last few years, we said, when trouble overcame him, and this brain mischief had been stealthily making its way nearer to his vital part. Very soon the old Rector's name was forgotten; but day by day and week by week we noticed that over the grave where his mortal part lay fresh flowers were strewn by some tender and unforgetting hand.

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#### CHAPTER V.

IN WHICH THE LIVES OF OUR CHARACTERS ADVANCE A LITTLE—SOME TOWARDS MERIDIAN, SOME TOWARDS SUNSET, SOME TOWARDS NIGHT.

FIVE years had passed away since Sophia and Percival were parted, and time had left its marks upon other personages of our story beside its heroine. Without any question Sibyl had greatly increased in personal attractiveness. Her dark superb style was developed and heightened as she drew nearer to the meridian of life. No doubt the early bloom of youth was gone; but her form had become more finely rounded, and her carriage had become more stately. She was a beautiful woman of the world; no man ever looked at her once only. But her manner had become more reticent than ever. She relied on her beauty for a place among her sex, and was at no pains to cultivate conversation, letters, or any branch of the art of pleasing except the setting forth of personal charms. Had her manner and her talk been what she might easily have made them, she would have shone

out as a beauty indeed in the prime of her womanhood. For Sibyl had no lack of sense nor of education neither ; but proudly reposing on her incontestable loveliness, she rather withdrew than put forward her other attractions. Still she could display herself when she pleased ; one occasion I well remember, when she met in company a vivacious Italian, who was extremely struck with her appearance, and paid her a profusion of gay compliments. At last, his English failing, he tried to enhance his polite speeches by some poetical quotation in his own language, adding that he was afraid she would hardly understand what he had said. On the instant Sibyl answered him back with a return quotation, as I understood, from the same author. Not knowing Italian, I could not appreciate her readiness : but that the retort was lively and happy was sufficiently proved by the foreigner's delight. His eyes sparkled with pleasure.

'You know more than I do,' he exclaimed, clapping his hands. 'You are a wonder—a wonder, my dear lady !'

But Sibyl relapsed into silence, and treated her success with a sincerity of indifference which showed how lightly she regarded any mental achievement.

Car had meanwhile changed in a way the very opposite. She had grown thinner ; and her frame, which was a large one, was more prominent. Car had gone in for intellectual ideas, and was improving her mind diligently, and was fast obtaining in our little town the reputation of being what is now called a woman's rights woman. She had become rather too fond of talking in mixed companies on high subjects, and so fell into the very error her lively little mother had foreseen ten years before.

'As to Car,' Mrs. Barbara said one day, 'she is turning schoolmistress. She talks lectures. I wonder she does not get a few lessons in action,' the little satirist said ; 'it would become her drawing-room and dinner-table finely. Any actor or popular preacher could tell how to arrange her elbows when she is discoursing. I can't ; for my education, dears, was neglected—in that particular department. We only danced and sang and flirted when I was a girl. Why, I remember once meeting a man who talked of Peru ; and, I assure you, dears, I thought it was somewhere in Germany ! But what matter ? The world was ours, and we had only to live and enjoy, and make others enjoy. And we did it, girls ; we did it ! O, that I was young again !'

Caroline Doolittle, however, was not very popular in Kettlewell ; and this was undoubtedly owing, not to her sound mental cultivation—which was as genuine as it was laudable—but to the mischievous habit she had of bringing her attainments into prominence. I suppose she did it to manifest her superiority

over the rest of the women ; but, unfortunately, the result was that, while she vexed the women, which she did not mind, she repelled the men, which she did mind, very much.

One man, however, paid her the tribute of a homage which was as unceasing as the voice of a waterfall. Morning, noon, and night Egerton sounded the praises of his wife. He had grown stout and healthy-looking, and he was as great a simpleton as ever. Indeed, his giggle had got new notes of imbecility in it, and was now a perfect wonder of vacuity in unarticulated sound. He had a slight drop in his lower lip, too ; and a fixed smile, which might have made his very dog understand what mental weakness is in mankind. But Egerton adored his wife. They had three children now, and from infancy he pointed these children to their mamma as the sole model of excellence and strength. Egerton was very fond of nursing his children, and would walk up and down with them by the hour, telling them at brief intervals to look at their mamma.

'Tremendously gifted woman,' he would say sometimes to his friends. Then dropping his voice like Guy Fawkes in the conspirators' room : 'Sometimes I see her reading for two hours at a stretch. I have timed her by my chronometer. What would have become of me if I had not married that woman, I don't like to say. I *think*,' Egerton would add solemnly, 'I *think*, with my disposition and my way of looking at things, you know, I should have gone to the Bad.'

Egerton had also given himself up greatly to the study of cooking, and had a little room fitted up with a stove, and hung round with pots and pans. I think this must have been about the time when the great Soyer was teaching us English people how to work wonders with soup, and fish, and fowl. In this room Egerton would concoct rare dishes, generally coming out with a very red face, and now and then upsetting a boiling saucepan down his thighs ; on which occasions he would rush from the room shrieking, and declare that it was really too bad, and he would give the whole thing up. Egerton had an idea of working a reform in the present way of cooking red mullet.

'A delicious fish,' he would say ; 'but under the present system it is sent up in paper ; treated, in fact, as if it were a package. It is intolerable that a delicious fish should be treated as if it were a package.'

Time, which was writing its record on our younger people, had not forgot to pencil deeper lines on Archibald Goldmore. Visible signs of advancing years were upon him, and the elephantine firmness of his tread was going. He stooped ; his hair was not so gray as once it had been. Goldmore, the wise, the sensible, the millionaire, was dyeing his hair to keep

up the appearance of youth beside his lovely wife. Ah, lovely young women, what fools you make of us withering elderly men !

And even the little mother, so long undying in her energy, began to show symptoms of decline. The light step was falling into a slower movement ; the quick motions of the frame were seldom seen ; she was growing a little deaf, and every one observed it, though with characteristic vivacity she tried to hide the failing. She began to like quiet—bodily quiet—and would sit in her chair hour after hour ; but her mind was as active and her tongue as pungent as ever, and often Sophia would laugh till she was tired at the little woman's quaint remarks or droll stories of days gone by. She commented on everybody and everything with the same satire, sense, and absorbed worldliness as of old. Her two sons-in-law furnished her with abundant material for criticism, and Sophia often blushed to think how heartily she enjoyed her mother's caustic comments on Goldmore and Egerton. Both were favourites with the old woman ; but Goldmore's mercantile stiffness and Egerton's feebleness of mind were too tempting for her to resist.

'I can hardly keep my countenance, Sophy,' she used to say, 'when these two men come in together. One I can stand ; but both is more than mortal can.' (They generally looked in after church.) "'Mrs. Temple, how do you find yourself this morning ? Pretty well ?"' She hit off Goldmore's voice to the note. 'And then, "O, how are you ? tremendously warm day, isn't it ? I do dislike a tremendously warm day,"' delivered exactly as Egerton would. Thereupon the little satirist would fall back in her chair laughing, and pleased to see Sophia laughing.

'Now really, mamma, you are too bad !' Sophia would say.

'Not a bit, Sophy. You like it or you would not laugh. And, besides, why need the old man be a bore and the young man a blockhead ? O, may the day never dawn when I do anything but laugh at a stupid or a fool !'

Still Sophia was kept in wonder and fear by her mother's growing turn for economy. In some things she was becoming almost penurious, and the question, 'What will it cost ?' which once she disdained to ask of anything that pleased her, was now never off her lips. There was a positive alarm about her manner, too, when any new expense was in view, which was full of grave suggestions ; and Sophia quite tried to reconcile herself to Goldmore's opinion that her mother had lived beyond her means, and was now trying to eke out her means. Besides, the old woman would sometimes, in a covert way, try to sound Sophia as to what she would do when left alone in the world, and once she actually asked if she had any idea of ever making money for herself. This uneasy question pointed only too plainly in the

direction of the practical Goldmore's observation, that Mrs. Temple was living on an income that would perish with her, and that Sophia would be left in poverty. But beyond conjecture no one could go, for the old woman kept her secret and would not suffer any interrogations. To Sophia she confided that she felt a little alteration in strength; but even to her she would not admit that the cause was old age.

'I am a little exhausted, Sophy,' she said one day. 'You see I have worked hard at enjoyment for a great many years. I shall do just what Johnson used to make our peach-trees and vines do at the Beeches. Let me rest for a few months, and next year I shall recruit, regain strength, Sophy, and be as lively as ever. O Sophy, Sophy,' she cried, clapping her withered hands together with a sprightliness which, whether real or feigned, was equally amazing, 'I shall enjoy the world—relish it—smack my lips over it, girl, for years and years to come!'

## CHAPTER VI.

IN WHICH LADY BEAUTY HAS HER PORTRAIT PAINTED IN PRINTER'S INK.

[SHALL I tell you why I have written this story? It was because I met Sophia Temple, then styled 'Lady Beauty,' in her fifty-third year; and her power to charm (at an age when charms are commonly supposed to be dead and gone) led me to ask, What is this woman's secret? And having searched into her life and character, and noted her ways, I venture to offer this imperfect record of her life, and this still more imperfect picture of herself, for the study of her sex generally. I wish to convince women that it is a great mistake on their part to suppose that their power to please departs with youth. At all times I have noticed that men of sense seldom admire—or, if you like, grow enamoured of—women for beauty alone, but for character, manner, taste, and conversation. Now while beauty (we must admit) lessens with time, character, manner, taste, and conversation may each be refined and enriched; and these, I believe, by their improvement can quite compensate for the loss of personal charms. Mere beauty is but one bright unchanging beam—it will even grow wearisome; but wit, sense, courtesy, and humanity are for ever casting forth new and unexpected rays, and enlivening intercourse with agreeable surprises. And so the story of Lady Beauty is written as a humble attempt to encourage women to try to be charming to their latest day. For they can do it if they try.]

Sophia was without question far inferior in physical beauty to Sibyl, and I think most people would have said that she was

not so handsome as Caroline. Her features were regular, her nose straight and fine, her complexion delicate and rosy; but still, in her face she was no model of womanhood. Her expression—and what is expression but character fixed in the countenance?—made Sophia what she was. Her delicate upper lip, with the hint of firmness in its fine line, told of resolution; the soft hazel eyes, with their upward glance, had a look of aspiration; the mouth was full of tenderness, ready to mould itself to every affectionate feeling. But what was this after all? Sophia's nature in Sophia's face!



She was the best dresser I ever knew. Of colour, either by study or natural gift, she was a perfect mistress. Accordingly her appearance pleased numbers of people before they saw her face; and many a time as she went down the street the curiosity of those who walked behind was aroused to see what might be the face of the woman whose gown and mantle were so striking by the harmony or the contrast of their hue. Flowers, ribbons, brooches, all that sets off dress, she used with the most unerring taste. And she managed through all the changes of fashion to respect herself and her own figure and face; in the fashion she always would be, but still she modulated it so as to be the queen



and not the slave. No doubt Sophia must have paid great attention to her dress, but I scarcely think she could have achieved such constant success, or so complete, had she not been a dresser born.

Then her manners in society were captivating. Here I think the little mother's homilies were useful indeed. With what a graceful attention she heard what you had to say! How modestly she gave her own opinion! She was well read, and could take her part in most conversations with ease; and now and then she could deal out a witty stroke. Indeed, Sophia had a great deal of humour, but seldom gave it the rein in society. Night was her time, with Car and Sibyl; and often the two more brilliant girls, as they laughed at her comical reminiscences of the day, would feel how easily Sophia could outshine them if she tried.

She loved the world. Here again the influence of her mother was perceptible, with this difference: that the world in her mother's language signified society, and nothing more, while Sophia would have included in it the whole of nature and life. I do not think I ever saw any one who had such a simple and unaffected enjoyment in living as she. A walk in the woods was enchantment to her; and, on the other hand, I have seen her on the tiptoe of pleasurable excitement for a ball. She was no poetic recluse; she never shunned society or its pleasures, but rather sought them. There was not a particle of affectation about her; indeed, she retained her girlishness and her love of girlish amusements for an unusually long time.

And she certainly remembered her mother's teaching in another particular: she tried to please. She knew that a woman ought to be an object of admiration and affection, and she ruled her whole life with this fact in view. But Sophia understood the art of charming, which, with all their gracefulness, few Englishwomen entirely do. Perhaps Nature feels that she has given our Englishwomen enough already, and, mindful of the limitation which ought to mark all mortal things, has withheld that one gift which would make them irresistible. Sophia knew that face and figure are not everything. She understood that it is the Woman a man admires, not her eyes or nose or lips or waist; the whole Woman,—person, dress, manner, talents, and character. Frenchwomen are in this respect more far-sighted than our English ladies, but even Frenchwomen do not fully realise this great social truth. A woman who knows that her dress is tasteful and her expression agreeable and her conversation lively will be little dismayed to hear of crows'-feet round her eyelids or gray hairs on her temples. Her better part is blooming amidst the gentle decay of more material charms.

You will laugh when I tell you before the story ends how Sophia Temple, Lady Beauty, at the age of fifty-three, had a new lover, and what a lover he was.

One touch I must add to this picture. Sophia was in the best sense of the world a religious woman. 'Without love,' cries a great novelist, 'I can fancy no gentleman.' A little diffidently I should add, without religion I can fancy no lady. Sophia's piety was in no way obtrusive, never puritanical, never ascetic, but gentle, animated, and humane. It quite saved her from her mother's narrow and heartless and merely sparkling worldliness. Sophia loved the world, but had a hope beyond it, and her religion gave a richness, a sweetness, a seriousness to all her charms.

I must admit, however, that many of Lady Beauty's own sex declared her to be nothing particular. That men admired her was not to be denied, but women would often ask dryly what it was for. When I knew her well enough to take such a liberty, I ventured to say to her one day that, greatly as she was praised by our sex, her own appeared to decline to accept her as by any means representative. She laughed with much gaiety.

'Some of us,' she replied, 'admire in ourselves what is forcible and striking. I believe you said to me yourself one day that Lady Macbeth and some other eminent ladies of the Imagination whom we remember make a sufficiently vivid impression to satisfy both sexes. You added something like this: I somewhat doubt if Lady Macbeth would be altogether a success in the drawing-room.'

'What, then, is your idea of a woman?' I asked.

'I have drawn up a set of Beauty rules,' she replied, rising and going to her desk. 'They will be the best answer to your question.' She laughed with great sportiveness, so that I could not tell whether she was jesting or in earnest.

So she gave me her Beauty rules there and then. But these I reserve for the last chapter of this story, when, in parting with my readers and my heroine, I shall narrate two curious illustrations of her power to please.

I repeat, this story is written for the instruction of the tens of thousands of Englishwomen who can be like Sophia Temple if they try. Whoever of my fair readers will follow this amiable example shall be relieved of the anxiety of glancing over her shoulder for ever to see what brighter beauty of later date and fresher charms may be coming up behind. Youth and the attractions of youth need not be despised by such a woman; neither need they be envied. Her knowledge of society, her ways of the world, her familiarity with character—these, together with taste, refine-

ment, virtue, and the desire to please, will give her the victory over time. Like our dear Lady Beauty, she too shall be charming to her latest day.

## CHAPTER VII.

CONTAINS THE ACCOUNT OF A BOXING-MATCH WHICH DID COME OFF, AND THE ORIGIN OF A LOVE-MATCH WHICH DID NOT.

PRENDERGAST, who resided not far from Kettlewell, had occasional opportunities of meeting the Temples; and it had been the little mother's expectation that he might renew his suit, and, perhaps, after a time, draw Sophia's affections to himself. He made no sign, however; and for long enough it seemed as if our heroine was to have no farther trouble from mankind. But at last—at the end of the five years just mentioned—a new lover came upon the scene.

His name was Done. He was the only son of one Mr. John Done, a retired merchant of great wealth, whose antecedents were generally described in this way, that he had something to do with leather. The Dones were plain people, but not vulgar; and having resided in Kettlewell for twenty years, and being charitable and religious, they had gradually made their way into our town society. In fact, they were now received in companies where, at their first coming, they dared not have set foot. Still, it was never forgotten that Mr. Done was not altogether one of us. When any stranger would make inquiry concerning him, the reply would generally be in this form: 'Done is a worthy old fellow, and gives capital dinners. If you want a subscription for any good cause, go to Done. He is modest, unaffected, and not the least purse-proud. *In early life he had something to do with leather.*' This last clause was a formula repeated as faithfully as if it were a line of 'God save the Queen.'

The virtue of the Dones being not of Mrs. Barbara Temple's kind—piety and charity could not make her regard anybody with favour—and their origin and manner being plain, she had never liked them. Indeed, at home—she would not ridicule people in company—she would sometimes say to her daughters that nothing could ever be made of these glorified tradespeople. Then, with a characteristic dread of a too sweeping assertion, she would add: 'Except sometimes, dears—except sometimes.' 'You know, girls,' she said one day, in her gay style, 'it is a proverb that there is nothing like leather; I don't think there is.' Which she delivered with one of her Frenchified faces of dislike, which always set the girls laughing. The plain Dones dreaded the witty, dashing, fashionable Mrs. Barbara Temple; and Mrs.

Barbara Temple regarded the plain Dones with repressed, but not invisible, scorn.

There were John Done the First, and John Done the Second. As is very often the case with sons of self-made men, John Done junior, while lacking his father's native sense and business energy, had inherited a double portion of his homeliness, made quite intolerable by a brassy assurance and a disregard of other people's feelings, which indeed amounted to an anxiety to inflict pain wherever he could. At school he had been hated for a tyrant and a bully; and it was also known among the boys that he would tell a lie—and that not a schoolroom lie—whenever it suited his game. Percival Brent went to school with him, being just three years his junior. Percival was a bright merry little boy, very well put together, and everybody's favourite; only that Done, who always disliked a boy in proportion to his school popularity or his educational promise, never lost an opportunity of tyrannising over him. One day, when they were all in the playground, Done, in making a high jump, fell very awkwardly, and, amidst the roar of laughter which followed, little Brent ran forward and made a pretence of smoothing the ground after the overthrow of the weighty Done. Exasperated by his fall, Done dashed forward and gave little Brent such a box on the ear as sent him spinning round, until he fell heavily to the ground. Brent sprang up, all knit into compactness with rage, and tried to give Done a blow on the face, which he scornfully warded off, and told the little lad not to be so impudent again. But Brent, bristling and stamping with passion, declared he would have a fight for it; which Done at first refused, for all the boys cried out at the idea. But as the little fellow would not be appeased, Done, having satisfied his honour by one refusal, and always liking to inflict pain, accepted the challenge, and the two stripped to their shirts and went at it. For several rounds little Brent was knocked all over the place; and they all felt for the game little lad, but were sorry to see him so punished, and especially in a hopeless fight. For my lady readers will observe that one of the crowning achievements in the noble art is to imprint your fist on your opponent's face. Now if your arms are only two feet long, while those of your opponent are three feet, it will follow that while he may be merrily hammering your countenance into ruin, your return blows may fall only on the unoffending air. This was just what happened now; and poor little Brent was having a very dispiriting time of it. Some of the boys, however, noticed that he went down wonderfully easy; and others, who knew that the Rector's groom was one of the best pair of fists in the county, began to think that perhaps the little fellow had picked up some tactics from Bobby 'Miller,' and was trying a waiting game.

Done thought so too ; and being a large mealy boy, with rather uncertain wind, he resolved to bring the thing to an end, and gave Brent one savage blow, which produced very disagreeable results on the poor little man's nose. Brent was not knocked out of it, however, as Done hoped ; but the very opposite. He was strung together with fury ; but even in his rage he did not forget the instructions of his master, Bobby 'Miller.' He rushed at Done ; and, while the other in his magnificence was guarding himself carelessly, little Brent 'got in,' and began to return on Done's face all the blows he had received, principal and interest. How those little fists flew and hammered ! How Done retreated over the ground, wildly trying to get his adversary outside range again, while still little Brent drubbed away with astounding rapidity and vigour ! The fact was the little fox was quite fresh, while Done was thoroughly blown. Bobby 'Miller' knew his business, and would have been proud of his young master had he been there to see. At last Done, nearly blind with blows and rage, made one grand effort to destroy his enemy with an appearance of ease. It was fatal to him. Brent was really warm to his work, and not likely to miss an opening. In rapid succession he managed to plant three blows just under Done's left eye, the last delivered with such force that it sent the lumpy fellow to grass, where he lay vanquished, Brent standing over him with fists still clenched, and burning, it seemed, for a little more.

That was sixteen years ago. John Done junior was now a rather bulky young man, with a white flat face, very small sunken eyes, a smile which expressed a narrow mind satisfied with itself, and unprepossessing manners. His habits, too, had not been the best, and it was known in Kettlewell that he was, in his sly way, a man of dissolute habits. He had now been absent, off and on, for nearly four years ; but when he returned home he happened to hear of Sophia Temple and her little affair with Percival Brent. By a curious chance he had met Brent in Australia himself, and, although outwardly civil to him, he remembered with a grudge the thrashing of years gone by ; for his nature was of that sluggish sort, where revenge burns long and sullenly, like fuel in a slow-combustion stove. When he came home and heard about Sophia the thought struck him what a nice girl she was, and what a fine thing it would be to marry the woman for whom his former foe was working now in another hemisphere ! He pondered. His eyes lit with their half-animal gleam. He said, 'I can manage it.'

## CHAPTER VIII.

IN WHICH MRS. BARBARA TEMPLE DELIVERS A SERMON ON FLIRTING WOMEN AND ENCHANTED MEN.

MRS. BARBARA TEMPLE was sitting in her favourite armchair, and the sunshine of a bright October morning was shining in the room. But that pleasant light revealed clearly the signs of time, which had for long enough been more or less manifest in the old woman's face. She either did not or could not any longer dress herself with the same deceptive skill as in days gone by, and now in every feature of her face any eye could see that she was an old woman—a very old woman indeed. She sat wrapped up carefully in a splendid Indian shawl, and a fire blazed on the hearth; and she looked cold and somewhat lifeless, although her eyes were still bright and her voice strong. Sophia, who stayed always with her, was reading the *Morning Post* to her, but the old woman did not listen with her accustomed attention.

'Sophy,' she said at last, 'I had a visit from Mrs. Done yesterday.'

'Indeed, mamma!' Sophia replied. She bit her lip, and so hid a smile, spirited and contemptuous, with a dash of amusement in it. 'And what does Mrs. Done want, mamma?'

'She says her son is in love with you.'

'Delightful, mamma!' Sophia replied, now with open amusement on her face. 'So he has thrown his handkerchief at last. He may pick it up again, mamma, and put it in his pocket!'

'Now, Sophia, don't talk in that hasty inconsiderate way,' the old woman said. 'In all those cases we should consider, dear: there is nothing like—'

'Leather, mamma!' Sophia cried merrily, catching up her mother's old mocking phrase. The bright October sunshine and some whim of her own feelings had put her in good spirits that morning.

'Very pleasant, dear,' the little mother remarked, shaking her head soberly. Somehow her whole style of speech was relaxing in energy; her words were pitched low; she did not speak with her former decision. Presently she said,

'You must remember young Mr. Done was never in trade; and beside, Sophia, he will settle twenty thousand pounds on you!'

'Can't be had under forty, mamma!' Sophia seemed resolved to treat the matter in this jocular way. It was plain that she realised that she and her mother had changed positions; she was virtually mistress now; there might be argument, but no struggle of will.

'Sha'n't cry "cherry ripe" under forty thousand pounds,



mamma!' And Sophia tossed her head and looked saucy and engaging and cheap at double the money.

'Now listen to me, Sophia,' her mother said. 'You will never have such another offer—from a money point of view.'

'Well, mamma, I will be serious,' Sophia answered, suiting her face to her words. 'I would not marry that man for anything he could give me. To begin with, I know what his life has been.'

'Now, my dear Sophia,' her mother said, with a deprecating gesture, 'I will not hear anything about his manner of life. The men are all in fault in that way.'

('One I know is not!' Sophia tenderly thought, clasping her darling's memory to her heart.)

'All are in fault that way,' continued Mrs. Temple. 'Some let us know it, others manage to hide it. In fact all are alike. And indeed, Sophia, better marry a man who, before marriage, has—has—*seen the world*, than one who will make you unhappy after. The wilder the bachelor, the steadier the husband, so I often have found it.'

'Now you don't mean it, mamma; you know you don't.'

'I do mean it, indeed, dear; and, besides, whose fault is it if men are wild? Ours, my dear; ours alone. We are so fond of conquest and impression that we never leave them alone. We get them into the habit of mind, dear. Have I not watched women? More especially if a man is at all celebrated, we long to make an impression. All women do. My dear Sophia, the greatest prude that ever lived is pleased if she hears that a celebrated man admires her. Be he married or single, she will not care; she had rather have the tribute of admiration than not have it. O Sophia, we are quite as much to blame as the men. We all like to have them at our feet; I liked it myself, dear.'

'Mamma!'

'When they are celebrated, dear, remarkable, worth catching, you know.'

'What is Mr. Done celebrated for?' Sophia asked scornfully.

'Money, dear. As good a thing as any other. Some men are conspicuous for fortune, others for looks, others for talent, others for family. But when a man is conspicuous for anything, women like to have his admiration, and that is how half the men are spoiled, dear; we do it ourselves. Why, even if a man is conspicuous for virtue, most of us would like to bring him to the ground—to have him sigh for us only once; and then we can toss our heads and be as good as we please. Our vanity is gratified.'

'Now, mamma,' Sophia said, rather shocked at this speech, and not knowing whether her mother was serious or not, but

resolved to treat it as jocular, 'this is only your merry way; do be serious.'

'I will, dear, if you will be serious too.'

'There—I am serious now.'

'Very well, then. Try and make up your mind to marry this young man. Twenty thousand pounds, Sophia!'

'Mamma, figures would not write the sum that I would marry him for. He is a vulgar, selfish, odious fellow. Marry him!' Sophia shivering as when some one walks over our grave. 'Call *him* husband!'

She made a grimace which her mother could not have surpassed, and which clinched the discussion.

'Very well, Sophy,' the old woman said, sinking back in her armchair rather wearily, 'you must have your own way. Only remember, dear, when I am gone, you had the chance of wealth and ease before I left you.'

The word alarmed Sophia afresh. She was certain now of what her future would be; but she put on a bright face.

'Never mind, mamma, you are not going to leave me yet; and when you do, if all else fails, I can sew gloves at twopence a pair; but I will not marry a man the very thought of whom makes my flesh creep. O mamma, mamma!' Sophia cried, relapsing into gaiety now that her point was won, 'for making you dislike an offer, there's nothing like leather.'

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## CHAPTER IX.

IN WHICH SOPHIA'S EYES FILL WITH TEARS.

FOR some reason which I cannot divine, Sophia treated the proposal of the leather-merchant's son as an affront. The matter oozed out—in Kettlewell everything did ooze out sooner or later; and to one or two intimate friends who spoke to her on the subject Sophia expressed herself with a sarcasm which was, perhaps, not fair, and was certainly not prudent. Some kind friend was at the pains of telling young John Done in what terms of ridicule and contempt Sophia had mentioned his name. This gentleman in his own person does not come before us, and it is enough to say that certain disclosures which reached poor Sophia's ears about this time concerning the conduct of Percival Brent in Australia were indirectly communicated to her by her insulted admirer, who, as has been said, had met Sophia's lover when abroad.

There resided in Kettlewell a widow of good family and small fortune, by name Mrs. Hands; and Mrs. Hands, relishing the fat living of the house of Done, and the house of Done being

gratified by the aroma of aristocracy which hung around Mrs. Hands, there came about an alliance between the two, offensive and defensive, which was always most enthusiastically maintained on the widow's side about lunch and dinner hour. Mrs. Hands was a woman who had seen a great deal of the world, and could converse agreeably. She had a beautiful set of teeth which made her smile a great deal, and a jolly laugh which caused people to feel comfortable, and between the laugh and the smile she had a reputation for thorough good-nature. She was known in every house in Kettlewell; she carried gossip with the punctuality of a postman; she had broken off two matches by her solitary act and deed; she was a kind of parlour earthquake, making splits and fissures and shakings innumerable in hitherto stable households; and yet for all this the true character of Mrs. Hands was not suspected, and everybody said she was such a good-humoured woman that it was a pleasure even to see her. Which shows, reader, what can be done with a beautiful set of teeth, and a smile and a jolly laugh discreetly inserted in the talk now and then.

Mrs. Hands was no favourite with Mrs. Temple. That prudent woman, mindful of an enemy's craft and malice, never said what she thought of the widow; but she knew, and the widow knew. In her way, Mrs. Hands feared the superior and more scientific worldling, as was shown by the contraction of her smile and the reduction of her laughter whenever Mrs. Temple was by. But Sophia liked the widow and thought she had a good heart.

One morning, about four months after the Done episode, Mrs. Hands called on Sophia; and there was to be seen in her face a remarkable solicitude and depression, so much, that Sophia asked, after a little casual talk, if anything had disturbed her.

'Disturbed me!' the widow exclaimed. 'O Sophia, my heart is bleeding this morning!'

'For what?' Sophia asked. 'For anybody I know?'

'For yourself, dear girl. Now I will not keep you in suspense. Is it not true—I know it is true—that you are still in your heart keeping up with the clergyman's son, Percival Brent?'

Sophia turned as white as death. Two or three strange whispers about Percival had reached her ears from different quarters in the last three weeks.

'Have you any news of him? Is he ill?' she asked, and yet illness was not what she feared.

'Sophia, dear girl,' the widow said, regarding her with eyes that absolutely moistened—by what art or emotion I know not, nor could the widow have told herself—'Percival Brent is a bad young man—unworthy of you—unworthy of your love.'

'What do you mean?' Sophia asked, drawing herself up with a kind of proud rebuke, which yet had a threatening of tears in its very indignation. 'Nothing bad can be true of him.'

'Nothing good, Sophia,' the widow replied, shaking her head religiously. 'It is sad for me to tell it to you, but it is my duty, dear—and my privilege too; for who would see you sacrificed to such a fellow?'

'You must not talk so,' Sophia said. 'I can't listen to it.'

'Now wait, dear, wait,' the widow rejoined, with perfect temper. 'Hear me for two or three minutes, and then say what you please, or do what you please. My conscience will be clear.'

'Go on,' Sophia said, in a less resolute tone.

'In the first place, dear, he has not been succeeding in his trade—business, whatever you call it. He has lost everything—or the person with whom he was in partnership has lost everything, or has died, or something unlucky, anyhow—Brent is nowhere at all in money matters.'

'That he cannot help,' Sophia said, and her heart revived.

'Perhaps not, dear. But he could help being idle; being fond of fast company; being fond of drink—or, at least, of being at places where people do drink, and all that sort of thing. This has been his ruin; for ruined he is.'

'I don't see much in what you say,' Sophia replied. 'Whenever a young man fails in life, people are ready to blame him, and ready to say, "What could you expect?" and all that.'

'Yes; but smoking, dear—drinking—fast society!'

'Well, he always smoked, and he always drank wine,' Sophia answered hotly. 'I suppose once he has taken a little too much, and of course spiteful people say that he drinks, and has ruined himself by it.'

Had she really spoken her whole mind she would have said: 'One offence he has never committed—he has not been false to me; and therefore his peccadilloes shall be forgiven.'

'Sophia, Sophia!' the widow exclaimed, 'there is more than that. How young you are to think such things ever go alone! Percival is—well, my dear, he is not over-particular about his morals, and that's the long and short of it!'

'Tell me all you know,' Sophia exclaimed, turning on her visitor almost fiercely, and with eyes that enforced an instantaneous reply.

'Well, then, my dear, he has been untrue to you.'

'Married!' Sophia gasped, 'to—to Bessie Warren?'

'Never heard *that* name,' replied the widow. 'And he is not married; but a great deal worse. He is well known out there for his liking for fast women, and he has made quite a

scandal of himself with an actress—a married woman, I believe, only her husband is in England, I am told.’

‘How do you know all this?’ Sophia asked. Her voice was scarcely audible; for she was now sure that her lover was false.

‘One of my little birds told me,’ the widow replied, with a jauntiness that sickened poor Sophia. ‘Forget him, dear. Be a girl of spirit. Treat him as he deserves.’

‘How do you know all this?’ Sophia repeated, putting her hand to her forehead and speaking in a tone of genuine anguish. ‘Tell me how you know it?’

‘Well, dear, if you must hear everything—and perhaps it is better—look here.’

The widow drew from her muff a newspaper, and opening it, pointed to a marked paragraph. The paper was an Australian one, and the paragraph, as will be seen, was composed with that engaging ease and lightness of touch which are characteristic of certain colonial journals.

‘CARRIAGE ACCIDENT IN THE SUBURBS.—Yesterday evening, as Percival Brent was driving Mrs. Lanigan to the theatre, after a pleasant lunch in the country, the horses ran away, probably having had too much Moët & Chandon—a beverage which, though it never affects the driver, is sometimes known to have an exciting effect on the steeds. After a wild career through the streets the vehicle was turned over close by the theatre, and the occupants thrown into the street; after which, lightened of their load, the inebriated animals proceeded to drag the vehicle to smash with amazing celerity. Young Percival got a heavy cut on the left temple; but Mrs. Lanigan, marvellous to tell, came off wholly uninjured. In spite of his bleeding brow, Percival was on his feet again in a moment, and, mindful of the poet’s advice, he went to Mrs. Lanigan’s side, “to take her up tenderly,” and “lift her with care.” The news of the accident and its happy termination soon spread in the theatre; and when Mrs. Lanigan appeared on the stage, the house rang with plaudits. Nobody thought of poor Percival; his countenance being of value to himself only, while Mrs. Lanigan’s is dear to the public.’

‘A word in your ear, dear,’ cried the widow, when Sophia had finished.

And she whispered something at which the poor girl’s cheek broke into a flame.

‘Now, Sophia,’ she said aloud, ‘have I not convinced you?’

‘I feel a little tired,’ Sophia answered. ‘I don’t know what to think just yet. If you will excuse me, and look in another morning, I shall be glad.’

‘Certainly, love,’ the good-humoured widow replied, not sorry to be free now that her work was done. ‘Don’t be cast down.

It is all for the best. You will soon get a husband. Think of Mr. Prendergast, or, better still, think of that excellent young fellow John Done. He is dying for you still; I am sure of it.'

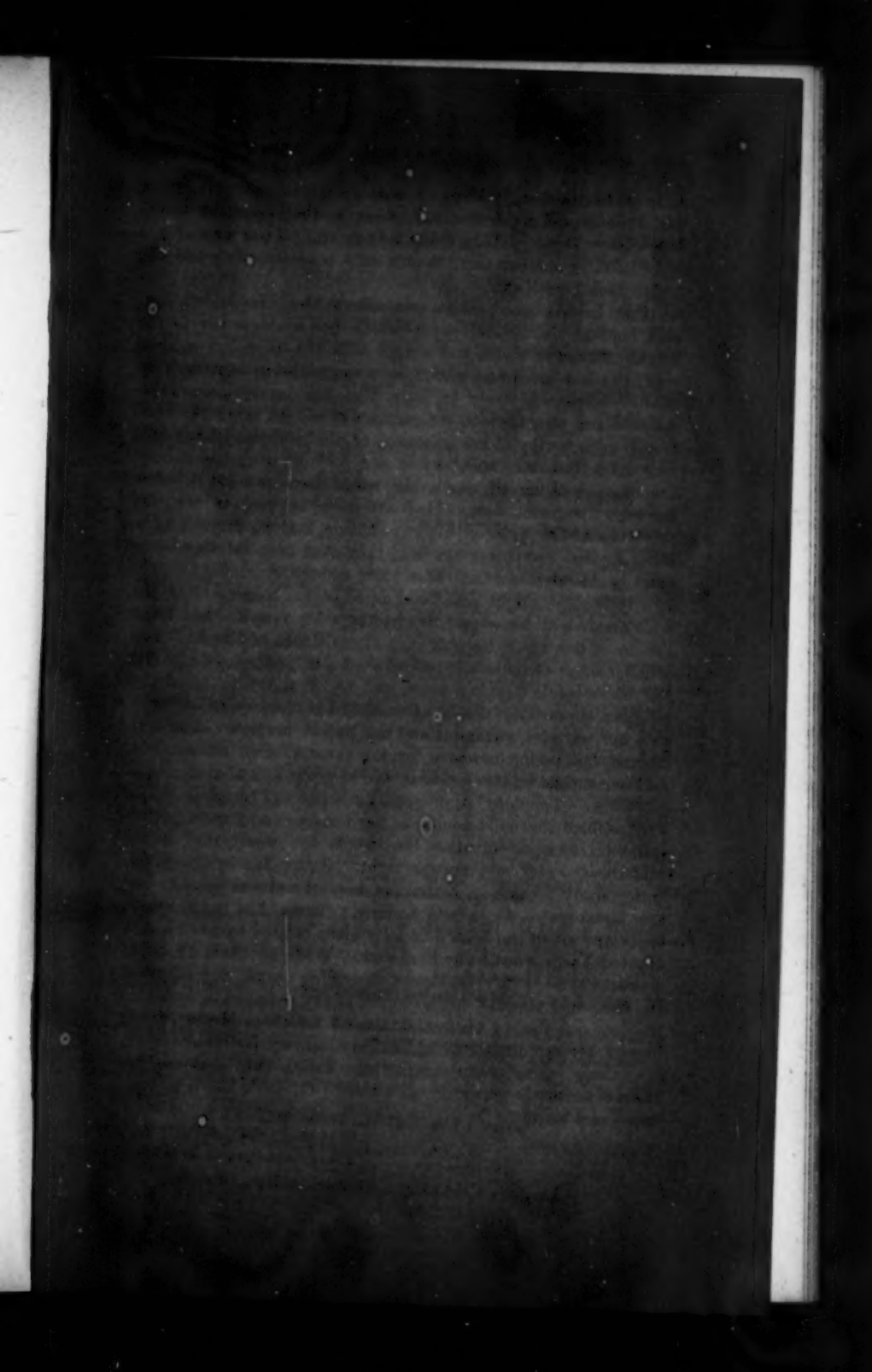
'Look in another day,' Sophia said mechanically; and the widow took herself off.

Poor Sophia stood silent, just where Mrs. Hands left her, still holding the hateful paper which had stabbed her to the heart. She was numb and stupid with the blow. For this, then, she had loved and waited in uncomplaining constancy for nearly six years! Only to learn that her lover was a rake, satisfied and pleased with the caresses of a light dame like Mrs. Lanigan, unworthy of her affection, or the affection of any true woman! Had there been any excuse for him, even had it been the blaming of herself, gladly she would have pleaded it before her own judgment now. Had she been married to him she might have disappointed his expectation, and so driven him to other women for pleasure. Had they even been meeting occasionally she might not have been warm enough, charming enough; twenty excuses might have been urged on his behalf. Now the fault must be all his own. She had kept her vow, and had found the joy of her life in keeping it. If any doubt of him had crept into her mind at times she had rebuked it instantaneously. With her whole soul, morning, noon, and night, and with an almost religious punctuality, she had cherished his memory, encircling it with her warmest memories and her purest prayers. And here he was exchanging her love for the favours of an actress, who sold her smiles with as quick an eye to profit as a shopman sells his wares. The downfall of Sophia's hopes was complete. The most refined ingenuity could not have discovered a more perfect and total form of torture. Her whole life was turned into a wilderness. Her mother was right. Better live for the world, better marry for money, better lay hold of material comfort and the pleasures of sense and fashion. These had no power to break and crush the heart like lofty ideas refuted by reality, and devoted hopes crushed by hard fact. With all these thoughts whirling through her brain in a struggling crowd, Sophia stood on, stony and tearless, in the centre of the room, until suddenly the door was thrown open, and Mrs. Temple's maid came flying in with her cap disordered and dismay in every feature.

'Come, miss! come quick!' she called out. 'Come upstairs; missus is going on so queer! O, don't lose a minute, miss—not a minute!'

*(To be continued.)*







BOUND FOR THE GARDEN

A SCENE IN "THE GARDEN" BY THE AUTHOR OF "THE GARDEN"

## BOUND FOR 'THE OAKS.'

(Illustrated by Adelaide Claxton.)

DRESSED with true Parisian taste,  
A slender figure, perfect waist,  
And *gants de suède* ;  
A *point de beauté*, quite unique !  
A touch of chalk upon her cheek—  
It was so very warm that week—  
She stood arrayed.

Below we waited at her door, [four,  
With neatly turned-out coach-and-  
And well-stocked baskets.  
With voice as sweet as singing linnnet,  
She owns she's late, but begs 'one  
minute !' [pin it,  
'Your veil, miss !' 'Goodness gracious,  
And lock my caskets !'

A rustle of a crinolette,  
A 'How are you ?' a cheeky bet,  
She cannot climb up !  
Dressed with goodness knows what  
on, [ten—  
There's something still she had forgot—  
A *mouchoir* worked with neat red cot-  
ton ;  
A joking 'Time up !'

At last she's seated on the box,  
Showing her 'broidered shoes and  
clocks.  
Her feet grow tired  
In high-heeled shoes with pointed toe,  
As they were then—I ought to know—  
But what cared she for pain, sir, so  
They were admired ?

She seemed delighted when I showed  
Her all the humours of the road  
From coach to coster ;  
She laughed as sings a pretty bird,  
She never seemed to weigh a word,  
And owned she never even heard  
Of Bright or Forster.

It seemed to me as if she'd been  
From Dan to Beersheba, and seen—  
I dare not doubt it—  
Paris, Venice, Naples, Rome,  
St. Peter's and its famous dome :  
She talked of everywhere but home  
And all about it.

Our souls were full of summer wea-  
ther,  
When she and I first sat together  
At that race-meeting.  
She made the running fast for me—  
A rank outsider I, and she,  
The favourite, ran together : we  
Got such a beating !

She laughed and chaffed at my ex-  
pense,  
To beggars threw my surplus pence,  
And cracked old jokes.  
She danced and rode—played cards,  
they say—  
I've never seen her since that day.  
If you go down, like me, you may,  
At this year's Oaks.

Our hearts were all we had to stake ;  
That Diamonds turned up seemed to break  
Her heart in her.  
She won a selling-race, I hear,  
At just 'the back end of the year,'  
And recommends her husband's beer  
To every partner !

AUGUSTUS M. MOORE.

## LADY STUDENTS AT CAMBRIDGE.

Girton College.

PROBABLY most of our readers sometimes look at that section of the newspapers devoted to University intelligence. They may have some special interest in perusing the lists of the successful, and they will have noticed within the last few months an addition to those lists which appear under the heading 'Cambridge.' At the end of the ordinary list appears a second and smaller one, headed 'Women,' or more often 'Females,' and after the name of each candidate the word Girton or Newnham. Girton and Newnham are the colleges at which these ladies have studied, and as names they are probably known to most of our readers. We propose to tell them something more about the life that is led there, and about the studies, whose fascination attracts so many women to Cambridge. Girton is the older of the two institutions, though not by many months. While the college was building a house was taken at Hitchin, and here the first lady students, since reverentially called by their followers the 'Girton Pioneers,' commenced their studies. But these studies were attended with many difficulties, for the distance from Cambridge was too great to allow of sufficient communication; indeed this was only looked upon as a temporary home, to be occupied till the permanent one was ready. The present building was opened in 1873; but it has been several times enlarged since then. It now forms two sides of a square; but

it is hoped that some day, when the number of students is doubled, the square will be completed, and the collegiate quadrangle attained. It is situated about one and a half miles out of Cambridge, in what is now known as the Huntingdon-road, but was originally the Via Devana of the Romans. Those indefatigable road-makers would indeed have been surprised could they have had a vision of the use their road was to come to: of lady students going to and fro between Girton and Cambridge, to attend lectures or do shopping, or, still stranger perhaps, of lecturers going out to Girton on that most modern of vehicles, a tricycle.

The college, with its red-brick walls, as yet but too scantily covered with creepers, is a striking object on this lonely country road. The front windows face south, the side windows east, and all look out on to the grass-plots in front, which, from one o'clock till dusk, are never long deserted by the lovers of the noble art of lawn-tennis. The college has two stories; on the ground-floor are the dining-hall, kitchen, lecture-rooms, and several sets of students' rooms. The dining-hall is on our right as we enter, a spacious apartment with a large bay-window, looking out on to another lawn-tennis court. Next to the dining-hall is a small reading-room, devoted to the use of students. Here the papers are kept, and most people stay in after lunch to read them and await the arrival of the second delivery of letters. Here meetings

are held; a notice-board is devoted to the use of the students, on which announcements about lost property, tennis-matches, meetings, &c., are posted. On the mantelpiece are several slates on which tennis engagements for the day are entered. A handsome bookcase contains some of the most honoured possessions of the college—the mathematical books used by Mrs. Somerville, which were presented by Miss Cobbe, together with a bust of their former owner. A small prayer-room on the first-floor contains some other treasures of a very different description. These are some Roman and Saxon antiquities found in the grounds of the college, among which are some peculiarly fine specimens of Samian ware and some Roman glass and bronzes.

A hospital has been added to the college, so arranged as to be entirely separate from the rest of the building. Hitherto it has fortunately never been employed for the purpose for which it was designed, but has been only used for college examinations. A laboratory is also attached to the building, where the natural-science students spend a great part of their days, performing strange rites with bottles and 'substances,' and whence proceed, at times, various unsavoury fumes.

The first and second stories, or middle and top corridors, as they are called, are almost exclusively devoted to students' rooms. Of these each student has two, a sitting-room and bedroom, which, in most cases, communicate by folding-doors. On the top corridor there are curtains instead of folding-doors, and though here the rooms are really single, yet the curtain arrangement allows a larger space for the sitting-room than the folding-doors; and besides,

these top rooms have charming little nooks and corners, which lend themselves to all manner of adornment, and are easily made so attractive in the eyes of their occupiers, that they do not care to evacuate them when they have a chance of doing so.

Emerson has said that the real advantage of University life is that of having a room and fire of one's own. Probably the Girtonian, as Cambridge custom calls the students, would be very willing to agree to this sentiment. To have a room of one's own means to be able to impress one's individuality on one's surroundings, and this most of the students do. The college provides furniture, which is of the same kind for all the rooms; yet individual additions and changes have gone far to give each little study a stamp of its own. In many cases the students have supplied the wall-paper, a great opportunity for displaying individual taste; often the college chairs have disappeared, to give place to some more comfortable form of lounge. Some of the musical students supply themselves with pianos, and others make use of those provided by the college in the hall and lecture-rooms. By an agreement among the students there is to be no music during certain hours of the day, so that the studios may not be disturbed.

The college supplies each room with a carpet, a writing-table, a cupboard and small side-table, and with everything that is required for a bedroom. Coals and candles are also provided—there is no gas in the building; in short, the college supplies all necessities, and in calculating the cost of residence the subject of furniture may be left out of the question.

Another great advantage, from

a pecuniary point of view, is that it is possible at once to estimate the total expense of a course of study at Girton. The cost is one hundred guineas a year, and this includes board, lodging, and lectures—in fact all necessary expenses except the books that students require for their own use. The college provides flies for driving to lectures at Cambridge—this is a great boon to those who are not good walkers, and is besides a great saving of time—and it is often possible for students who are going to Cambridge for other purposes to avail themselves of a vacant seat in a ‘lecture fly.’ It is unfortunate that the college is situated so far out of Cambridge, as it would on many accounts be pleasanter to be in the town; still there are some advantages in its country situation. The ground is higher than in Cambridge, and the situation healthier. Girton is unusually fortunate for this part of the country, in being situated on gravel instead of on clay, and the fields round about afford a pleasant, though often a very muddy, walk. Cambridge scenery is proverbially flat, and the top windows of the college, whence the spire of Ely Cathedral, seventeen miles distant, is distinctly visible, afford a good view, and reveal what peculiar charm this kind of country possesses.

It may be of interest to our readers to know something of the life that is led by the students at Girton. The plan is to have all the meals in the dining-hall: breakfast is supplied there from eight to nine, lunch from twelve to three, and dinner, which is, of course, a general meal, at six. Tea is sent to the students’ own rooms; about four o’clock the cheerful rattling of teacups is heard in the corridors, and announces the arrival of the servant

with a large trayful of cups. These trays are taken round to all the students’ rooms and also to the lecture-rooms, where the combination of tea and study forms a peculiar feature of Girton lectures. Four o’clock is an important hour at Girton, and one that is not willingly missed by students. Those who are absent from their rooms for a short time generally leave a notice on their doors asking for a cup of tea; and another notice that may frequently be observed when walking along the corridors is ‘Please see to my fire.’ ‘Engaged’ is also put up by busy students who are anxious not to be disturbed.

The morning hours are of course the best working hours: from nine to one is the usual working time, one being the favourite hour for lunch. Nearly all the lectures at Girton are given in the afternoon, and the hours between two and six are generally divided between lectures and tennis or walks. But most students have some completely free afternoons, which they can devote to expeditions into Cambridge or long country walks. Lectures in Cambridge are given in the morning, and to these the natural-science and history students go. Most mathematical and classical lectures are given at Girton.

Nine o’clock in the evening is the time which public opinion fixes as the right moment to leave off work. Of course this is not always possible, but as a rule it is the sociable hour, and the time for tea-parties. Trays with materials for tea, coffee, or cocoa, are sent round to the rooms, and as every one has a kettle of her own, tea can be taken at any time, and this is generally a social meal, which two or three friends partake of together, enjoying the luxury of leisure after work. Once



a week a practice is held by members of the choral society, who usually give a concert at the end of the term, to which friends are invited. There is also a debating society, and an institution peculiar to Girton, a ladies' fire-brigade, 'womanned' by the students, in Cambridge parlance. This was first thought of when some small fire-engines were presented to the college; and some of the students, after receiving due and formal instruction, taught the many details of pumping, passing buckets, carrying in mysterious knots, &c., to the rest. The institution continues to flourish and to hold weekly practices.

Girton, of course, has a reading-room club. The college provides some of the daily papers, and the students club together to buy other dailies, weeklies, and monthlies. A meeting is held once a term to vote on the papers that are to be taken. The *Athenæum*, *Spectator*, *Punch*, the *Nineteenth Century*, and one or two others retain their position undisputed; others are now taken, now left, according to the disposition of the particular meeting. Some of the papers are bound at the end of the year; most are sold by auction at the end of the term, when it often happens that in the excitement of the moment some particularly popular or amusing paper is sent up to a figure beyond its original price.

The usual length of residence at Girton is three years, or sometimes a little longer, depending on the line of study taken up. Students are not obliged to reside for the three years, but unless they do so, they are not entitled to receive a certificate. The year is divided into three terms of about eight weeks each, corresponding to the University terms, and it has lately been arranged that

those students who desire to do so can come up for some weeks during the Long Vacation. There is, of course, an extra charge for this, but the cost of residence in the 'Long' is somewhat lower than for the ordinary terms.

Most students read for what are called the tripos or honours examinations; but until quite lately the ladies' colleges were not formally acknowledged by the University, and though the students had the benefit of University teaching, they could not claim the right to join in the degree examinations. This privilege was, however, almost always accorded them through the kindness of the examiners, who undertook to look through the answers to the questions set, and report what the place on the list of the candidate would have been had she been formally examined. After this had been done for some years, the number of students at both Girton and Newnham increased so much that it became advisable to make some definite arrangement about these examinations, as it did not seem any longer desirable that so large a number of students should have to depend on the favour of individual examiners. Several memorials to the Senate of the University were therefore drawn up, begging them to admit women formally to the examinations, and the result was that, after much discussion, some proposals in favour of the women were drawn up, and passed by a large majority of votes. It was agreed that they must conform with the same regulations as undergraduates in regard to keeping terms, that they must pass what is popularly known as the little-go examination or an equivalent, and that they should on these conditions be admitted formally to the tripos

or honours examinations, that their names should be published in a separate list, and their place in the class indicated. No provision was made for admitting women to the examinations for the ordinary degree, nor did the University agree to confer the title of B.A. upon them; but it does grant them a certificate which is really an equivalent. The formal conferring of degrees on women, a step already gained in London, has yet to be attained in Cambridge; but there are hopes that if the institutions there continue to be as successful as they have hitherto been, and the women to occupy as prominent a place in the lists, even the day of 'girl-graduates' cannot be far distant.

The most popular subjects of study at Girton are the time-honoured classics and mathematics; and although the more modern studies of natural science and history have also found many adherents, it has hitherto been in mathematics that Girton has achieved its most brilliant triumphs. At Newnham natural science and history have been most successful.

Before admission to the college, students are required to pass an entrance examination, unless they have already passed some other similar examination, which exempts them from it. Such are the senior local examinations and the matriculation of the London University. In connection with these entrance examinations scholarships are awarded. Most of them are due to the munificence of private benefactors, or of the *16th* City companies, whose generosity in regard to educational purposes has of late rivalled their wealth. Most of the scholarships are awarded for general success in all the subjects of the examination; some are given for special

subjects; and every four years a scholarship of eighty guineas a year for four years is given for proficiency in classics. Students are not admitted under eighteen years of age.

In thus fully describing Girton and Girton life, we have made it unnecessary to give as detailed an account of Newnham. There are, of course, differences in the constitution of the two colleges, partly because they were founded with different aims. The aim of Girton was from the first what it still is: to supply for women a similar University training to that enjoyed by men. Newnham had at first more modest aims, and was started merely to afford a home for women who came from a distance to attend University lectures, without imposing any restrictions with regard to length of residence or examinations. After a time, as the institution increased, its students also became candidates for the triposes; and soon a second hall had to be built, and in 1880 the two were incorporated as Newnham College. It is still possible for students to come to Newnham only for a short time; many reside for a year only, and merely qualify themselves for what is known as the Higher Local Examination; nor is it compulsory to read for any examination at all. The charges are more moderate than at Girton, being only seventy-five guineas a year for board, lodging, and lectures; but each student has only one instead of two rooms of her own.

Newnham College is situated in Cambridge itself; a little turning to the right, just at the end of the long line of college gardens, leads to two large red-brick buildings, known as the South and North Halls, and these together constitute the college. Very new these buildings look to those who

have just passed by the beautiful college gardens, and gazed with admiration on the old gray buildings, so charmingly set off by the fine old trees and grass that suggest spring at all seasons of the year. Newnham and Girton have no past to recount like these venerable buildings, but let us trust that they may have a future; and those who have followed the fortunes and success of the colleges so far will be content to wish that the end may be worthy the beginning.

## SUNSHINE AND CLOUD AT TENNIS.

'To be wroth with those we love  
Doth work like madness in the brain.'

It was only a game of tennis;  
How could I be so put out?  
But something possessed the balls, dear,  
The way that they bounced about!

I ran up to *your* balls, and missed them,  
Then pouted when *you* took *mine*;  
And took it to heart when you told me  
I'd better stop *outside* the line.

'You don't understand the science';  
What wonder, when *you* were so near?  
Love's science is all too absorbing  
To leave room for another, dear.

The balls came so fast and so furious,  
I *never* was in the right place;  
The ground was as hard as a rock, dear,  
And the sun shone right in my face.

And Lucy and Charley were laughing,  
'Let's polish them off while they fight!'  
You know how I *hate* to be beaten;  
But beaten we were, and outright.

Some tears were very near falling  
As I buttoned my boots awry,  
And struggled into my jacket,  
Scorning the help that was nigh;

*Sunshine and Cloud at Tennis.*

Fearing to glance at you, darling,  
As I hastily left the field ;  
Knowing the might of love, dear,  
Fearing that wrath might yield.

Of course I meant you to follow ;  
But when I turned my head,  
You had climbed the steep, and taken  
The road to the town instead.

O that weary homeward journey !  
O those girls ! how their chatter jarred !  
For a cloud was over my sunshine,  
And life's sweet harmony marred.

'Shall I see him again, I wonder ?'  
I wandered into the wood :  
In the glow of a golden sunset,  
All in white still, there you stood.

A few months ago, my darling,  
I could have passed you by  
With a careless nod and greeting,  
And coldly averted eye,

And nursed my wrath till to-morrow ;  
But *now*, as the minutes take flight,  
I feel that I could not exist, dear,  
Without making it up to-night.

For minutes empty of love, dear,  
If we only could count the cost,  
Are so many sunbeams wasted,  
Are so many joys that are lost.

One glance into eyes forgiving,  
One kiss, and the cloud is past :  
Life is far too short, my darling,  
For a tiff like that to last !

MINNIE.

## ON THE LOST ARTS OF CONVERSATION AND LETTER-WRITING.

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I AM afraid there is much reason to believe that conversation and letter-writing will shortly be numbered among the lost arts; that, indeed, to a considerable extent, they are lost arts already. This may seem a somewhat bold statement at the present day. Mr. Fawcett gives us periodical orations on the prosperous statistics of the Post Office, from which it is clear that the correspondence of the country is in a most voluminous condition. Moreover, it is clear that this is the great talking age. Eloquence is gone; but talk remains. From every local board and vestry, to the biggest vestry of all, the House of Commons, there are floods of talkings. But for the most part it is what Lord Beaconsfield calls the 'chatter of irresponsible frivolity.' Such old adages as 'Talk less and say more,' 'When you have nothing to say, say nothing,' have become obsolete and disregarded. We do not, perhaps, talk so much at home as people do on the Continent. There it seems to be chatter, chatter, chatter, all day long. We are astonished at the volume and rapidity. We wonder whether the constant stream of talk is ever fed at the source by anything in the way of reading, reflection, and observation. In this, as in other respects, we are constantly approaching the worst Parisian models. Of course I am not speaking of the best *causerie* of the *salon*, but of the constant unmeaning chatter that is to be heard on every side. But this is no more real conversation than

the tearing of raw flesh by the Terra del Fuegians would be recognised as dining by Ude or Brillat-Savarin. Similarly, the immensity of correspondence does not prove the existence of letter-writing. I know a man who has his letters delivered to him literally by the cart-load. The Post Office authorities cheerfully allow him to send down his own cart for his letters. He has a staff of about fifteen clerks to sort and answer them. Only about half a dozen letters come into his hand; and of the whole half dozen there is perhaps only one that is worth calling a letter. We live in an age that rejoices in quantity. The deterioration of conversation and letter-writing has been constantly going on. It has become much worse within a measurable period. I have known good letters and good talk, which, within the last decade or two, have become totally extinct, or at least are upon the inevitable eve of becoming so. There is, therefore, much reason to fear that, if the destructive process continues unabated, we shall have to add those of writing and speaking, not absolutely, of course, but considered as branches of the fine arts. They are in the state of 'going, going,' before the final 'gone' of the hammer.

Certain arts there are that seem already to have perished. We may say that memory itself, as a fine art, has passed away. Where are those who, like the Rhapsodists of old, could repeat the whole of the *Iliad* or *Odyssey* at a sitting? The art of

painting glass can only be feebly imitated by us moderns. This summer I was looking at some of the oldest glass in England in Tewkesbury Abbey, and some of the oldest-painted glass in France at the cathedral of Chartres; and where will ever such glass be produced again as that of six or seven centuries ago? There is a particular purple dye which seems absolutely lost without hope of recovery. The fine art of pigments seems to be almost lost. Look at the Turner and Claude that hang together, according to Turner's request, in the National Gallery. The Claude is almost as fresh as yesterday, while the Turner seems at least three hundred years old. What is called the Samian pottery appears to be a lost art. At Caerleon-upon-Usk, and many old Roman stations, there is this old perished pottery found, surpassing the science of the present day in closeness of grain and beauty of polish. Where is the secret of building like the Pyramids, if all is true of the Pyramids that Mr. Piazzi Smith asserts about them? In the same way conversation and letter-writing, considered as fine arts, show a lamentable decadence everywhere, and are totally lost in some strata of society. Who now looks for letters like those of Cowper and Madame de Sévigné, which unite the highest literary finish with perfect naturalness? or such letters as those of Madame de Rémusat, most valuable when they are most open and unrestrained, as in those to her own husband and son?

If one were asked to define what was the great charm of conversation, it would be easier to give a description than a definition. And even a description would fail in conveying that certain subtle essence and charm which in really

good talking we feel rather than define. We go to inspired wisdom for adequate similes, and we there read of iron sharpening iron, and of face answering to face as in water. There are two special ingredients in all good talk, without which conversation may be an intellectual exercise, but is devoid of a spiritual tone. These are silence and sympathy. The secret of true companionship is that you are permitted not only to speak, but to keep still. Your conversation will not be mistaken for intellectual fence; your silence will not be misconstrued for stupidity or indifference. You venture to pause, that you may follow the train of thought that has been aroused, or to shape the argument or example that is lurking within the mind. If you pause, though simply for the purpose of gathering in the features of a landscape or of a room, this too may be a help for our curiously adjusted mind. Above all, we ought to have perfect rest and affiance in the sympathy of our companion. The silence and sympathy are to conversation what shadow and foliage and the sound of falling water are to scenery. What makes women, perhaps, the best talkers of all is this spiritual and moral element, the tact, the good taste, the grace, the quick-witted apprehension, and the delicate raillery. These things confer the true artistic touch in conversation. Plato, in his wonderful conversations, the Socratic Dialogues, always gives his subject a fringe of graceful wit and poetical illustration, but beneath the shell there is invariably a very hard nut to be cracked. Arthur Helps, in his *Friends in Council*, has adroitly introduced a lady, with the effect of considerably lightening the dialogue. In many works of a philosophical nature the employment



of a dialogue form is most advantageous. It enables a subject to be viewed on every side and in every shifting aspect, and gives the side-lights and undertones which can never be fully exhibited in any other shape. Dialogues of this kind actually occur, and are not only the wire-worm efforts of authors in their study. A metaphysical author of great repute, in a preface to a well-known book, thanks a distinguished man for the light and aid that had been afforded to him in the course of conversation during long walks. A case in the law-courts or a debate in Parliament are only extreme instances of a very arduous kind of conversation. One may reverently say that the conversation which involves sympathy, intelligence, generous appreciation, approximates to what is called the communion of saints. We bring away not only the impressions of fact and force of thought, but the intonation of voice, the witchery of smile or sigh, the friendly clasp of hands, and the spirit-kiss of related intelligences.

It is this kind of conversation which is greatly deteriorating in England. At no time did we greatly excel in it. 'Neither our language nor our temperament,' says Lord Houghton, 'favours that sympathetic intercourse where the feature and the gesture are as active as the voice, and in which the pleasure does not so much consist in the thing communicated as in the act of communication; and still less are we inclined to value and cultivate that true art of conversation, that rapid counter-play and vivid exercise of combined intelligences which bears to the best ordinary speech the relation that serious whist bears to "playing cards," and which presupposes, not previous study, but the long and due preparation of

the imagination and the intellect.' Lord Houghton has a suggestive remark on 'the inevitable frivolities that wait on large companies of men, or the moral and intellectual condescensions which great popularity in the social as well as in the political world demands.' He relates that when Pozzo di Borgo visited an English house he would draw the last arrived foreigner into a corner, and say, 'Viens donc causer; je n'ai pas causé pour quinze jours.' Madame de Staël said that *un esprit de sociabilité* existed in France from the highest to the lowest, but in England this is chiefly noticeable from its absence. As Novalis said, 'every Englishman is an island.'

We may be able to give some approximate reason for the decline of those delightful arts which once had a greater amount of existence among us than Novalis might have credited us with. First, the grand old leisure of other days has departed and fled. Moreover, talk has become a marketable commodity, and men prefer rather to listen than to speak. Our great men distrust mixed audiences; their speeches may be repeated, or, worse still, they may be distorted. Tennyson's words are quite true:

'When all his warm heart, sherris-warmed,  
Flashed forth in random speeches,  
Ere days that dealt in *one* swarmed  
With literary leeches.'

It is not pleasant for a man to find his own remarks served up in a mutilated or disguised form in another man's diary. No doubt there are persons who would feel greatly pleased and flattered if their random remarks, when possessing real shining ore, should be gathered up and carefully edited. Johnson knew of his Boswell's proceedings, and no doubt was both secretly and

openly pleased with it; and the conversations which Mr. Nassau Senior has so faithfully recorded with the great people whom he met at great houses have the merit of popularising and elucidating their views, and shedding much serviceable illustration on their characters and careers. I imagine that few of his personages would quarrel with these records; and it is very probable that in most cases they were not published without the full assent and privacy of the persons concerned. But people become shy when other people, without tact or taste, or the necessary literary qualifications, and without asking any permission, are bent upon compiling the literary *ana* which our age so persistently demands, and of which it of course obtains a corresponding supply. Another reason for the present thinness, both of quantity and quality, may be mentioned. The immense mass of printed literature which is ushered into the world every day cuts the ground from under a good deal of conversation and letter-writing; or rather, we might say, are conversation and letter-writing shaped in a particular way and directed into this new channel. The people who are best able to talk and best able to write address their remarks to the multitude instead of to their friends. They find that their time and their pen possess a marketable value at the current rate of exchange. Hence it happens that those who might be supposed best able to write and talk, often do so comparatively little; and hard thoughts are sometimes directed towards them by their friends, who think that they do not take up the ball that is tossed to them with sufficient alacrity.

But to a man who writes much

the writing of letters frequently becomes an intolerable burden. It threatens to become the last straw that breaks the camel's back. Similarly, the man who has been incessantly talking abroad cannot stand much of it at home. I know a great man whose life is spent amid contending voices, and he has been obliged to adopt double windows and double doors that he may insure absolute rest and silence. There are some men who, even in this workaday practical world, have the golden gift of leisure, who have no imperious demands on their time, or, at least, who manage their time so well that they are not obliged to sacrifice private friendships to public purposes. Macaulay was an instance of this. It seemed almost indifferent to him whether he was addressing a friend or addressing a multitude, whether he was writing to a friend or writing for immortality. A remarkable example of this may be seen in the *Edinburgh Review* (October 1881). In an article on M. Circourt there are several letters from Macaulay to M. Circourt, written to disabuse his mind of some popular errors respecting the British occupation of India. Many people derive their impressions respecting India from the late Mr. Cobden, who was so extremely peaceful in his views, that he wished that his countrymen did not occupy a single acre in the East, and who looked upon our Volunteer movement with horror and detestation. The notion which M. Circourt shared with Cobden was, that we had gained our Empire by violence and fraud. In some brilliant letters, which might easily be cut up into leading articles for the *Times*, Macaulay exposes the ignorance and injustice of this idea. It must have cost him a good

deal of time from the composition of his History to write them; and his only motive seems to have been that his beloved England should not suffer in the estimation of an 'enlightened foreigner.' Macaulay had a true bull-dog attachment to England, which will always endear him to his countrymen, except those who vote that the rose is only a vegetable, the human heart a bit of muscular tissue, and patriotism only an enlarged kind of local prejudice.

The commonest errors in spoiling the art of conversation are the talking too little or too much. On the one hand there are the people—for whom, in comparison, I entertain a greater degree of sympathy and respect—who talk very little. This is occasionally the case to an extent which is ludicrously exaggerated. They apparently confine themselves to monosyllables. They seem to think with the misanthrope that conversation is the bane of society. Turning into the byways of anecdote, I may mention a curious instance that is recorded of a man who wished to be hermit and misanthrope by deputy. This was the Hon. Charles Hamilton, who, in the time of George II., laid out at Cobham the famous grounds celebrated by Grey and Horace Walpole. Among other pretty things which he erected on his grounds was a hermitage; and he took it into his head that he would like to have a real live hermit to inhabit it. He accordingly advertised for a hermit, and offered seven hundred a year to any one who would lead a true hermit's life, sleeping on a mat, never suffering scissors to touch his beard or his nails, and never speaking a syllable to the servant who brought his food. A man was found for the place; but after three weeks he had enough of it,

and retired. It is hard to see what good his seven hundred a year could have done him under such conditions. Still there are people whose tone of mind is essentially of a hermit-like condition. Keble says of all of us, 'Our hermit spirits dwell and range apart.' One meets with people whose social powers have died out from sheer disuse. They sometimes become sardonic in their monosyllables. They put in Burchell's 'Fudge!' to most remarks they hear. They do not think it their duty to contribute any *epaves* to the social picnic of conversation. Apparently they regard us poor trivial talkers as being extremely shallow; and perhaps remind us of the saying that 'speech is silvern and silence golden; speech is human, silence is divine.' For myself, I like the silvery sound of really human speech. It is just possible that these sublime beings do not talk for the simple reason that they have nothing to say. One remembers Coleridge's story of the man in the coach, whose dignified reserve, thoughtful face, and massive brow, he regarded with mute admiration. The great being said nothing until they went in to dine at an hotel ordinary, when he plunged his fork into some potatoes and exclaimed, 'Them's the jockeys for me!' Unquestionably one often meets with people who are quite painfully shy and reserved, feelings which are quickened by their own knowledge of their defects. Addison was a notoriously poor talker. He himself knew it; but he also knew how much he had to set off against this deficiency. 'I haven't got ninepence in my pocket,' he said; 'but I can write you a cheque for a thousand pounds.' Goldsmith 'wrote like an angel, but talked liked poor Poll.' I know people

who possess an astonishing genius for repartee. But unfortunately it takes them a good many hours to prepare their repartee; and their answer is only ready when it is literally a day too late. Of course there are people who resemble those familiar birds of our childhood, that, unlike the birds of Aristophanes, can sing, but won't sing, and should be made to sing. They can talk, and they ought to talk, and they should be made to talk. Indeed, there is one class of men whom I confess I regard with some measure of suspicion and dislike. They are a peculiar race of listeners. They make it a point of hearing as much, and saying as little, as possible. They are the suckers of other men's brains; or, as Disraeli said of Peel, the burglars of other men's intellects. They pick up the floating opinions of clubs, and the talk of the Lobby. I myself have read a letter from a man who, if I named him, would be recognised as a man of character and genius, who offered his services to the party in power as one who could disseminate or pick-up 'rumours.' I could hardly have believed it, unless I had read it with my own eyes. Such a matter would only be possible to those who make politics a game of faction and self interest. These are the men who make the party leaders aware of the feelings of members, and enlighten members respecting the opinions of their constituents. They largely influence the press, and especially the daily newspapers; and the outcome of the leading article is frequently the mere echo of the listener's version of the tone and talk of society.

A very good story is told of an eminent Oxford professor who at one time had very considerable influence over the minds of many

of the young men of the University, and was supposed to pursue a Socratic method in eliciting the dormant powers of young men. The professor knew how to be silent, and also how to talk, especially in the *salons* of the great and wealthy. One day he invited a promising undergraduate of the great intellectual college to take a walk with him. The young gentleman was slightly flustered with the honour of the invitation, and was prepared to pick up any golden grains of truth which might be let fall on his account. They walked out as far as Iffley, but to his great surprise a stolid silence was consistently maintained by the mighty being whom he was prepared to accept as his guide, philosopher, and friend. At last, as they turned back from Iffley Lock, the undergraduate ventured to observe, 'A fine day, Professor.' The Professor vouchsafed no reply, but strode back silent into Quod, and the young fellow did not have strength of mind to renew his attempt. As they entered beneath the archway the Professor fixed his keen philosophic glance upon him, and mildly said, 'I did not think much of that remark of yours.'

Let us now take the converse case. Conversation is the social salad, and there are frequently people who mar it by putting in too much of a single ingredient. The secret of the proper combination thus becomes almost lost: the overdone item is with these people their own personal talk. They love the music of their own voices. No social oratory is so perfect as their own. And it is wonderful how they talk. The limpid stream flows on like some freshet in a gutter. These voluble talkers are generally those who have the least to say. Their talk

to a great extent consists of frivolities and personalities. People talk of the scandal-mongering of small towns and villages, and think that this at least is an evil from which the great communities of London and Paris are exempt. But the case is nothing of the sort. The evil is not of locality, but is radical to human nature. They do not gossip in the same street, but they gossip in the same set. Monologue has always a most unfavourable effect on conversation. Sometimes it is intensely interesting, but oftener still it is immensely the reverse. Any one ought to forgive the monologues of Coleridge or Macaulay. But even those who have listened to Coleridge have described his conversation to me as being exceedingly prolix and tiresome, an impression which Carlyle in his *Reminiscences* abundantly shared; and Sydney Smith congratulated his friends that Macaulay, after his return from India, had displayed some brilliant flashes of silence. 'He overflows with learning,' said Smith on another occasion, 'and stands in the slop.' Once Sydney called him a 'book in breeches.' Sometimes we listen with the greatest interest to the monologue of the lion of a dinner-party. It is some traveller who gives us choice matter which he has omitted to print in his book, or which he thought it judicious to withhold from the public eye. It is the biographer who has represented his hero as 'an angel upon earth, but who will interest his friends in confidential talk by detailing the weaknesses and eccentricities of the man, and so giving a life-like description of him. But even here 'fools rush in where angels fear to tread.' While the grand talk goes on, some insipid nonentity will make some obvious re-

mark that death is extremely certain, or interrupt to quote some item of news from the papers with which everyone is acquainted. The monologue of very great people may be pardoned, but even in their case it is often a mistake. There is the well-known story against Madame de Staël, who was delighted with the conversation of a gentleman who had been introduced to her. It was simply her own conversation with which she was so delighted, for the gentleman to whom she had been introduced was both deaf and dumb. Very famous talkers might be mentioned who have found their listeners fast asleep, or they had ceased to listen and had stolen out of the room. These people have got their opinions cut and dried on every conceivable subject. Like Mrs. Wittitler they express an immense variety of opinions on an immense variety of subjects. I have got an idea that very few people are entitled to more than half a dozen opinions; by which I mean that they can hardly have half a dozen opinions really worth having, the result, that is to say, of their own independent judgment established on reasonable grounds. But there is no subject on which these flippant talkers will hesitate to pronounce authoritative verdicts. If they talk to a lawyer, they will kindly explain law to him; to a doctor, they will know more about medicine than he does; and they will kindly enlighten the parson about theology. They remind us of Merlin and Vivien:

'And smiling as the master smiles on one  
Who is not of his school, or any school,  
Save that where blind and naked Ignorance  
Delive a bawling judgments, unashamed,  
On all things all day long.'

One reason for the comparative decline of conversation is that good talk, not to say tall talk, is

at a decided discount at the present time. It is an art that is falling out of conversation, because there is comparatively very little demand for it. It has ceased to be a social necessity. There was once a man who used to let himself out as a gentlemanly walking-stick to maiden ladies. They did not like to take their walks abroad without the protection of one of the baser sex, who was expected to offer mild and appropriate remarks in a subdued tone. There was also the man at Paris, who, when there were thirteen at a dinner-party, on the shortest notice was expected to make himself number fourteen, and exhibit all the social qualities of a valuable guest. This was also carried on in London, and was known to; the initiated by the name of the Hiram Jones system. These humble useful vocations are gone, and with them the Yorick of the feast, whose jests and gambles 'set the table in a roar.' People don't go to dinner in order to talk. They are perfectly indifferent to the table being set in a roar, and can find better uses for it. They go in order to dine. Their criticism and observations are lavished on the *menu*. Their talk is about game and wine, politics and commerce, according to the nature of the 'shop' element, and scandal. A good murder case is something that everybody can talk about. It was the theory of Mandeville that private vices are public benefits. A man doesn't want information. He considers it an impertinence. He does not come to be instructed, but to eat and to drink. Anything that offensively interferes with the benignant processes of eating and drinking he avoids. The feast of reason and the flow of soul are a mere drug compared to the feast of venison and the flow of champagne. These are

the reasons of the banquet. And even when the banquet is nothing particular the intellectual habits of our time are hardly such as to lead people to appreciate a higher mental plane of talk. Society seeks its own level as surely as water, and the level is a watery one. It will not admit a severe mental strain, especially at hours of refection. It dislikes men who, like Edmund Burke,

'Went on refining,  
And thought of convincing while they  
thought of dining.'

I had a curious instance of this some time ago. I went to dine with a great man *en famille*. He was a man whose wit and learning must have been often appreciated by my present readers in some of the best contemporary literature of our day. What a pleasure it was to listen to the man! Anecdote, aphorism, criticism, flowed in a constant stream. How he exposed the fallacy of the last speech, the errors of the last leader, the misquotations of the last review, and out of his own abundant stores shed a flood of illumination on some anxious subject greatly occupying the minds of men! But the prophet, in the mean time, was without honour in his own country. The members of the family, the ladies especially, were simply bored and tired. They began and carried on their own conversation without the slightest reference to the host and master of the family. His voice was nothing more than the summer wind breathing through the room. His remarks fell totally unheeded, and did not evoke a single response. As a rule young people do not care for grown-up talk. In the same way grown-up people do not care for talk which is above 'their level best.' Most grown-up people would



hardly appreciate the great man, although his merits might be recognised at a select dinner at the Athenæum, or by the clever men who occasionally dine together at the Trafalgar at Greenwich. The same sort of thing occasionally happens with careful and clever letters. I have known some such letters sent to Paterfamilias, who has looked at them, and calmly said, 'I daresay it is very nice, but it seems rather long and very illegible. I will lock it up, and John shall read his letter to us himself when he comes home.' I am afraid that if John knew of this he would feel a little discouraged.

Doubtless there are houses where the tradition of good talk is as carefully kept up as that of good wine. We have had full accounts of the famous talkers of old, such as Luther, Selden, Coleridge; then we have the tolerably full accounts of later talkers, and even some glimpses of good talkers of the present time. Very wonderful has been the talk of Holland House; the talk at the houses of Miss Berry and Lady Ashburton, at Lydia White's and Lady Davy's; the wit of Sydney Smith; 'the rich outpourings of Lord Macaulay's infinite knowledge, or the picturesque and prophetic utterances of Mr. Carlyle.' Lord Houghton—from whose phrases I am quoting—and Mr. Hayward are among the best of our modern conversationalists. Sydney Smith could not make the smallest remark without provoking a laugh; and even when he said grace the young lady who sat next to him said, 'You always are so amusing.' I think it was Bishop Wilberforce who once made the remark that conversation at dinner-parties was losing in originality, and the best part of it was now made up of talk about new books and quota-

tions from early copies or proof-sheets in advance.

I once went to dine at the high table of a Cambridge college, where I was to meet with a professed conversationalist. In those days there were professional conversationalists, as at the present time there are professional beauties. I was told that this worthy man spent hours in his study every morning in qualifying himself to shine at the dinner-table and in the combination room. He had published a translation of German poetry at a time when German studies were voted heterodox at the tables of colleges. The subject which cropped up was Vienna, and of course several of the Fellows knew Vienna pretty well. But the curious thing was, that whenever the conversation might wander, it was always recalled by our well-read, well-bred friend to somewhere in the immediate vicinity of Vienna. Few men seem to have had a greater charm of conversation than Robertson of Brighton, whose *à la française* still linger as traditions among those who know him. John Frederick Denison Maurice—he used to drop the John just as Dickens dropped all his Christian names except Charles—was a man who was known in the circle of his intimates as 'The Prophet,' and some of the best and most gifted men of the time used to hang on his accents as something preterhuman. No one ever lost the impression of that earnest face, or the vibrating tones of that tender sympathetic voice. I met Maurice on one occasion at a wedding breakfast. He proposed the health of the bride and bridegroom. The lady turned round, and in rather bad taste exclaimed, 'Now, Mr. Maurice, I call you to witness that I entertain no intention of obeying.'

Maurice answered, with his sad sweet smile, 'Ah, madam, you little know the blessedness of obedience.' Bishop Wilberforce, whom I mentioned just now, not only studied the art of conversation, but all the externals on which conversation so much depends. Dean Burgon contributed an article to the *Quarterly Review* on his *Life*, which, socially speaking, was much more interesting than the *Life* itself. The Bishop made a point of never taking the head of his table. He took care to sit on one side, which would give him a larger area for the purposes of conversation. He would not only have those on either side of him, but those exactly in front. He also took great care who should occupy these particular places, and what should be the subjects of the conversation. To a man of the Bishop's diplomatic turn of mind, the dinner would prove not so much a relief from business as the busiest part of the day.

Conversation and letter-writing are the mutual complement of each other, the obverse and reverse of the same thing. Conversation is the oral letter, and the letter the written monologue. Some persons hardly appreciate the importance of conversation. Yet every day experience may teach them that it has monetary value. You will find that it is a costly luxury to have a conversation, either short or long, with your doctor, and particularly, if long, with your lawyer. In course of time we all come to see the uses of method and economy in this great department of human life. Here, as elsewhere, it is possible to do our conversation wisely or stupidly. Here, as elsewhere, it is important to have a direct aim, and to proceed directly to it. Many a general correspondence has been carried on with a par-

ticular purpose. A correspondence has just been published at Paris between Benjamin Constant, who was once a member of the French Embassy at London, and Madame Récamier. It was a love correspondence, and the object of Madame Récamier was to 'let him down gently.' To quote her own words, 'in the course of a year and a half she brought him down to friendship.' The immense proportion of the world's talk in the way of conversation or correspondence is on love or religion. The conversation and correspondence are especially important when taken in combination. If we get our first and safest impressions from conversation, it is in correspondence that we obtain our most careful and deliberate survey. *Litera scripta manet* is the wisest of admonitory proverbs. There are few letters which, if skilfully interrogated, will not show more of the mind and character of the writer than the written page reveals. In these days of the abbreviation of all processes of labour, talk and telegram are doing much of the work of correspondence. Just as there are people who have an enormous correspondence, so there are people who have a great deal of talking to do, and whose talking is exceedingly important. There is a man whom I have in my mind's eye at the present time. He is the centre of great public interests. He is the manager of one of the greatest public companies in the world. As sometimes happens, all the responsibility of directors and committees has gradually shifted to his own shoulders. He has to speak often and very promptly; his word is law, and his behests are carried into immediate execution. Whatever drops from the lips of such a man is of the highest business moment. In a few words

he disposes of a matter that involves thousands of pounds. When the House of Commons was disputing one night over an item in the Estimates, a member remarked that he had often disposed of ten times the amount in one tenth of the time. Now this great man of business drops his weighty words everywhere as he goes about. He is constantly accompanied by two shorthand writers, whose duty it is to take down every word he says. I am afraid that, with all the multitude of words and with all the care used in transcribing them, there would be very little that, from a social and literary point of view, would be of much interest. The 'notes' would hardly do for 'general circulation.' I know a man whom I will designate as 'the special correspondent.' He cannot boast of two shorthand writers, but he is the happy possessor of one. When he takes his walks abroad in some foreign city, he utters lively remarks, suggested by things in general, which are promptly taken down by his faithful attendant. A little editing, a little form and finish, and his talk speedily appears in some paper that has the biggest size, or the biggest circulation, or, at least, has the biggest importance—in its own eyes—of the whole European press. I do not think, my friends, that our own random talk, though not confined within limits of business, would contain much that is better. 'What a continent of mud it is!' exclaimed Coleridge, after examining some voluminous work of expository theology. If our daily talk were all taken down in shorthand and read out aloud to us, I am afraid that in our most conceited moments we should own that it was but a sorry and vapid business. It would be a mere mud-bank, not a continent, but the beach at

very low water. Hardly twice in the twenty-four hours should we attain to the high-water mark.

Can something be done that we may retain or recover the lost arts? We speak of them as lost, although they still linger here and there. We speak of the sinking vessel as lost, although it has not yet dipped beneath the wave, and of the Alpine climber as lost, when he has missed his footing, before he has sounded the depths of the crevasse. Are not these arts well worth sedulous cultivation? When we talk or write, we have to consider the question not only of extent, but of intensity. There is an immense amount of talking and writing, on which too much attention cannot be bestowed, though it may only meet the ear or eye of a single individual. A man who wishes to persuade another to enter into a business partnership (limited), or to persuade a young woman to enter into another kind of partnership (unlimited), will think no time or pains thrown away in arguing in favour of his object. You ask the thorough advocate whether he would rather win the verdict of the dozen average British jurymen in the box or of the hundred thousand readers of the trial, and if he thoroughly enters into the genius of his profession he will unhesitatingly prefer the first. Any clergyman who has only a very scanty flock will feel persuaded that if he does real good to a single individual of the number, that is more than if his mellifluous accents flowed unavailingly over a mob of well-dressed miserable sinners; so true it is that

'Our echoes roll from soul to soul,  
And spread for ever and for ever.'

There is always an ethical element in conversation. There is one very pleasant trait recorded in Mr. Stopford Brook's *Life of*

*Robertson of Brighton*: 'In the drawing-room he would separate himself from those he liked best, to converse with and spend a greater part of the evening by the side of the most neglected, sacrificing himself to brighten a dull existence.' Perhaps his influence on society was more powerful, as more insensible, than his influence in the pulpit. I may observe, by the way, that I hardly know of any richer dearer letters, with such full outpourings of mind and spirit, than these letters of Robertson to his friends. Tennyson has something on the words 'which make a man feel strong in speaking truth.' There was that wonderful old woman, Hannah More, who is not to be put down as simply of the 'goody goody' kind, and who wrote plays for Garrick before she wrote tracts for the Somersetshire people. She had a great idea that she would like in her talk to do good to people, but, like a sensible woman, if she knew she was going to meet the person a second time, her simple object was to make herself as agreeable as possible on the first occasion. It is unavoidable that there should be an immense deal of fringe before one comes to the heart of a conversation. Often a call is regarded as a mere prologue to an invitation or epilogue to a feast. Such calls are often considered as being trivial in the extreme. This, however, need not necessarily be the case. The call, even of this kind, is not barren of good results if it enables us to cultivate neighbourly feelings and evidence a disposition for kindly offices. Here, as elsewhere, a little tact and consideration will help us. There is a very striking passage in the *Letters of Robertson of Brighton* which I will venture to transcribe: 'A long stupid visit is over. I

do believe that there ought to be more interest in humanity and more power of throwing oneself into the mind of every one, so that no visit should appear dull. An infinite Being comes before us with a whole eternity wrapt up in his mind and soul, and we proceed to classify him, put a label on him, as we should upon a jar, saying, "This is rice, this is jelly, and this is pomatum;" and then we think we have saved ourselves the necessity of taking off the cover; in truth, each having a soul as distinct in its peculiarities from all other souls as his or her face is from all other faces. This seems to have been one great feature in the way in which our Lord treated the people who came in contact with Him. He brought out the peculiarities of each, treated each one as a living man, and not as a specimen of a labelled class, like the stuffed giraffes, cassowaries, humming-birds, and alligators you see in museums. Consequently at his touch each one gave out his peculiar spark of light.' The waste of power in conversation is something like the waste of sunlight on the sands, or the waste of power in the tides. It is quite supposable that the sands, like the coal, may one day yield their 'bottled sunshine,' and in the coming age of electricity the enormous motive power of the sea may be utilised. If we could all get into the Palace of Truth there might at first be a little confusion in our talk, but it might be hoped that ultimately it would exhibit a little improvement. That was a philosophic being who said that he always made a point when he met a shoemaker of talking about shoes. Each person, as Robertson said, has his sparkle of light. The one thing to do is to get at the heart of a man and at the heart of a subject. *Approfondissez* is a

true motto. If our fellow human being is worth calling on, he is worth studying. It is not a bad plan to settle in your own mind definitely, or even make a note of, what you shall speak about. Even at the risk of being abrupt do not give up your subjects. It is to be borne in mind also that the effect of your call is not limited

by speech. There is a silent effective influence which, like dew or like shadow, never fails to attend every human personality. But, lest I should be thought myself to have transcended all decent limits either of conversation or of correspondence, I will here make a pause.

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### A SONG.

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LEANED my own love from her casement,  
Morn's early softness to greet;  
Smiled on the sweet summer blossoms,  
Worshipping low at her feet.

Wistfully wept the Narcissus,  
'Ah! thou art fairer than I;'  
Tenderly murmured the Jonquille,  
'Let me gaze on till I die.'

'Be thou my sun,' prayed the Sunflower,  
'Sun, which no shadow e'er knows;'  
'Teach me thy grace,' sang the Lily;  
'Give me thy blush,' sighed the Rose.

'Pluck me,' the Jessamine whispered,  
'Make thy white bosom my home;'  
'Give me one kiss,' cried the Daisy,  
'One, ere the cold winter come.'

Then when the light of her beauty  
Fell where I lingered apart,  
Kneeling before her I faltered,  
'Give me, my darling, thy heart.'

WALTER B. PATON.

## 'MAKE YOUR GAME!'

SOME years ago, when the boards of green cloth at Baden, Homburg, and other continental watering-places were still in full swing, I made the acquaintance at Spa of a very intelligent and agreeable Frenchman, or, as he might be more accurately described, cosmopolite, who regularly passed his summers at whichever of these lively resorts appeared to him most attractive for the time being, and, as it happened fortunately for me, had on this particular occasion selected for his temporary sojourn the above-named little Belgian paradise, the Casino (or Redoute, as it was then called) of which was presided over by M. Davelouis, commonly styled, on account of his extreme parsimony, *Daveliard*. My new companion was one of those peripatetic philosophers,

'Qui mores hominum multorum vidit et urbes';

'Who'd viewed men's manners, Londons, Yorks, and Derbys.'

He had been everywhere and seen everything, knew a smattering of half a dozen languages, and might have served as a reliable guide to most parts of Europe, including the highways and byways of our own metropolis. At one period of his life he had occupied the post of private secretary to an Emperor, and at another, when his funds were at low water, had been a constant contributor to the *Times*. His store of anecdote on every conceivable topic was prodigious, and even a commonplace story gained point and relish from his manner

of relating it; while on the subject most appropriate to the place where we were—the public gaming tables—his experiences, derived from personal observation, were to me, then a mere novice in such matters, peculiarly interesting. He played but little himself, and only by fits and starts, as the fancy prompted him, immediately desisting if fortune proved unkind; 'never back your ill-luck' was his motto, and he invariably acted up to it.

We had been talking one day of the autocrat of Homburg and Monte Carlo.

It is not surprising (he said) that so well known a millionaire as Blanc should have been constantly applied to for pecuniary assistance by unlucky players, whose requests for a sufficient sum to enable them to return home were usually granted, and by penniless adventurers, to whose supplications—not considering himself bound to be generous, except where the credit of his establishment was concerned—he invariably turned a deaf ear. Once, however, he was compelled in self-defence to depart from his usual principle of 'non-intervention,' as the following anecdote will show. Among the visitors at Homburg in the year preceding my arrival at Spa was a certain Count E., whose right to the title borne by him was, according to all accounts, to say the least contestable; and who, having lost at roulette what little cash he originally possessed, was at an early period of the season literally without a sou. A scheme occur-



ring to him by which he proposed to replenish his coffers, he repaired one evening to Blanc's private abode, and inquired of the servant in attendance at what hour in the morning he could see his master.

'Not before ten o'clock,' was the reply; 'monsieur is not an early riser.'

'That will be too late,' answered the Count; 'I am leaving by the first train, and must see him, as I have news for him which he will be glad to hear. So, as the matter presses,' he continued, slipping five louis which he had borrowed for the occasion into the valet's hand, 'I shall count upon your showing me into his bedroom when I come.'

This being agreed on after some hesitation on the servant's part, the Count withdrew, and, as eight o'clock struck on the following morning, was ushered into the luxuriously furnished chamber where M. Blanc was reposing. Carefully closing the door and bolting it, the Count advanced towards the bed, the occupant of which, aroused by his entrance, started up in surprise, and, recognising his visitor, asked what he wanted.

'My dear Blanc,' said E., composedly seating himself at the foot of the bed, 'I want ten thousand francs, and naturally come to you for them.'

'But,' stammered the other, still half asleep, 'you are aware, Count, that I am not at liberty to dispose of our funds without consulting my colleagues. Wait till this evening, and—'

'Not an hour,' interrupted the intruder; 'you have only to open your safe, and hand me the money. Will you do it? yes or no?'

'Impossible!'

'Very good; then I must take my measures accordingly.'

With these words he rose from his seat, drew from his pocket a strong nail and a hammer, and began to drive the former into the wall, as if about to hang up a picture. Blanc stared in utter amazement.

'What are you doing?' he gasped, stretching out his hand towards the bell-rope.

'Take care,' cried E.; 'if you touch the bell, as sure as you are lying there, I will strangle you before they have time to break open the door.'

Blanc glanced at the tall and powerfully knit figure before him, and shuddered.

'I don't understand,' he murmured.

'Don't you!' ironically retorted the Count. 'You see this nail? Well, I have a rope in my pocket, and I am going to hang you. Now, will you give me the money? No? very good;' and he went on hammering until the nail was firmly fixed in its place. Then, turning towards his victim, who was sitting upright in the bed trembling in every limb, he coolly remarked that, before proceeding to extremities, he would give him one more chance. Blanc, perceiving that matters began to look serious, thought it best to comply with the audacious demand; and, opening the safe, extracted from it a roll of bank-notes, which he handed to the Count, warning him at the same time that if he remained another hour at Homburg it would be at his peril.

'You may be perfectly easy on that score,' replied E., who had already pocketed the notes, and was on the point of quitting the room. 'Now that our little affair is settled, I have nothing to detain me here. Adieu, papa Blanc; when the nine o'clock train starts I go with it.' And so he did.

Somehow or other the story oozed out, and Blanc was terribly chaffed by his colleagues. 'I could have reconciled myself to the loss of the money,' he said long afterwards; 'but I cannot and never shall get over the nail in the wall!'

One more anecdote relating to this notorious personage, and we shall have done with him. When Garcia was at Homburg, carrying all before him by his extraordinary luck, the highest stake allowed at the *trente et quarante*—namely, twelve thousand francs—was raised in his case as an exceptional favour, and, at his own request, to sixty thousand, an arrangement which, far from benefiting the bank, proved a mine of wealth to the player, whose gains at one moment amounted to nearly two millions of francs. It was Blanc's custom two or three times in the course of the day to walk through the rooms, and see what was going on; and one afternoon, on his approaching the table where Garcia had just profited by a series of 'reds,' the latter, accosting him in a mocking tone, triumphantly declared his intention of despoiling the bank of its last florin.

'Monsieur Garcia,' coolly replied Blanc, leaning on his cane and peering at the Spaniard through his spectacles, 'you may be right, or you may be wrong; but I will tell you one thing. I have at the Banque de France a little income of three thousand francs a year invested in my name, and I will take good care that you shall never deprive me of that!'

Six weeks later, Garcia had lost every farthing of his winnings, and was obliged to borrow a few louis from the bank to enable him to return to Paris.

'Of all the questionable characters, and they are many,' observed

to me one day my French acquaintance, 'who frequent gaming-tables, none are more carefully to be avoided than the so-called, or rather self-styled, "professors." These worthies are almost invariably men who have been ruined by play, and from pigeons have become rooks; they are easily to be recognised at the *trente et quarante* by their close attention to the game, standing opposite the *croupier* who deals, and assiduously pricking their cards, but never, for the best of reasons, staking a sou. Their main object is to discover among the spectators some credulous tyro, blest with more cash than brains, to whom they may describe in the most seductive colours their infallible scheme for breaking the bank, and thereby induce him to confide to their tender mercies a certain sum, the larger the better, on their solemn assurance that it must be doubled in a single sitting; and this is precisely what happened to a young friend of mine at Baden a year or two ago.

'He was watching with great interest a pretty Russian countess who had been losing heavily for the last half hour at the *trente et quarante*, but who still continued to back her ill-luck without the slightest sign of emotion. Three times in succession she had staked on the wrong colour, and was hesitating what to do next, when my friend's attention was suddenly diverted from the game by an individual standing beside him, who—but I had better tell you the story in Gaston's own words. He was, he said, or seemed to be, in a state of considerable excitement, and, after excusing himself for addressing me, remarked, with reference to the countess, that it vexed him beyond measure to see money so foolishly thrown away. "Is it

not, monsieur," he went on, "the height of absurdity to persist in relying on chance, instead of on a safe and perfectly intelligible system! If I had played this deal, I should not have lost a single *coup*." "Why didn't you?" I asked innocently enough. "Simply because I had not sufficient capital," he replied. "My wife, who is mad after *roulette*, lost four thousand francs yesterday, and I was fool enough to let her have them. So, as it requires a hundred louis to carry out my system, I am obliged to wait until I receive a remittance."

'I looked at him attentively for the first time; he was tall, tolerably good-looking, and remarkably well-dressed, nothing in his appearance betraying the professional hanger-on, and curiosity prompted me to continue the conversation. "How much," I inquired, "do you generally gain on an average?" "Supposing that I begin with a hundred louis," he answered in a careless tone, "one day's play will double it; and if we put the week's winnings at fifteen thousand francs, we shall not be far out." "Have you any objection," I resumed, "to explain your system to me?" His eye brightened immediately, and after a moment's reflection, probably to satisfy himself as to my being worth the trouble, he took me aside, and, drawing from his pocket a well-thumbed memorandum-book, every page of which was completely covered with hieroglyphics doubtless intelligible to himself, but assuredly to no one else, proceeded to unfold his scheme. What with the technical terms employed by him, and the multitude of abstruse calculations, which only served to puzzle instead of enlightening me, I was as much in the dark at the conclusion of his explanation

as I had been at the commencement, and preferred from sheer weariness to accept at once his assurance of the infallibility of his system rather than listen any longer. Apparently, my bewildered looks convinced him that he had better change his tactics; for he suddenly stopped, and, affecting an air of *bonhomie*, suggested that, as I was a novice in such matters, it would be more prudent for me to refrain from personally attacking the bank, and to intrust him with a hundred louis, which he formally engaged to double at one sitting.

'Up to this time I had no serious intention of risking the money, and rather demurred at the proposal; all objections on my part, however, were speedily overruled by my new acquaintance, and in an unlucky moment I drew out of my pocket two thousand-franc notes, on which he eagerly pounced, and, before I could utter another word, had seated himself in a vacant chair at the *trente et quarante*, and exchanged them for gold. It struck me that the croupier who handed him the two rouleaux glanced curiously round the table, as if in search of the probable owner of the notes; but I was too much absorbed in my venture to think of anything else. Taking my seat on a sofa commanding a good view of the game, I watched my friend's proceedings with palpitating interest, and remarked that, although he seemed to stake his money somewhat at random, he never failed to prick the card that lay before him. I also noticed that he was, or pretended to be, troubled with a cold in his head, from the frequent use he made of his handkerchief; and subsequently ascertained that every time he replaced it in his pocket, three or four of my louis went with it.

Nevertheless, at the end of the first deal we were about five-and-twenty louis to the good; and, on my suggesting to him that it would be advisable to leave off, he so strongly combated the idea that I reluctantly allowed him to have his way, and returned to my seat. With the next deal, however, the tide of fortune turned; my representative's handkerchief journeyed as before periodically to and from his pocket, but his faculty for divining the right colour ceased altogether, and each successive *coup* made a fresh inroad on our rapidly decreasing capital. In vain he tried to reassure me by divers encouraging winks; stake after stake became the prey of the inexorable rake, and in less than a quarter of an hour the last louis—those naturally excepted which he had so carefully stowed about his person—was swept away. Rising from his seat with a perfectly unconcerned air he took me by the arm, and, pointing to the card in his hand, affirmed that in the course of thirteen years' experience he had never witnessed so extraordinary a run of ill-luck. "Come to the café," he added; "we shall find my wife there, and a glass of wine will not do us any harm."

"I assented mechanically, and found myself face to face with an elderly and most unprepossessing female sitting at a table, with a tumbler beside her exhaling a suspicious odour of rum. Exchanging a significant glance with my companion, she essayed to improvise a smile, while he briefly related what had passed, complacently adding that we should be more fortunate another day. Incensed beyond measure by his patronising tone, I told him in plain words that I should not require his services a second time. "You assured me," I said, "that

your system was infallible, and in less than an hour you have lost every farthing of my money. Had I known what your promises were worth—" "Monsieur," interrupted the hag with a look of withering contempt, "my husband has lost more than five hundred thousand francs belonging to other people, and this is the first time that any one has presumed to find fault with him!"

'Scarcely less dangerous,' continued my friend, 'are the light-fingered gentry who prowl about the tables, seeking to glean a stray coin which may have escaped the notice of its owner, and always ready to claim the money staked by others. Two years ago I happened to be at Monaco, and strolling into the play-room after dinner with a few louis in my pocket, put three of them on red, which came up. I left them on the table, and red came up again. While I was debating whether to risk another chance or not, an individual behind me stepped forward, and was in the act of appropriating the twelve louis, when I summarily stopped him by saying they were mine. "Quite the contrary, monsieur," he replied, with imperturbable *aplomb*; "they are mine." Fortunately for me, the dealer, who was doubtless acquainted with my opponent's proclivities, interposed, and at once settled the question by ordering him to withdraw, which after some show of reluctance he finally did. Meanwhile the red came up a third time, and my twelve louis became twenty-four. Satisfied with my evening's work, I was on the point of beating a retreat, when I felt a gentle tap on my shoulder, and turning round, beheld to my astonishment the identical claimant of a few minutes back, who with an expressive glance at my waistcoat-

pocket besought me to remember that he had brought me good luck after all. I am ashamed to say that I was more amused than irritated by the fellow's impudence, and tossed him a louis as I left the room.'

One afternoon, while we were lounging together in the Allée du Marteau, I asked my friend if he could instance many players who had been winners in the long-run. 'Hardly one,' he replied, 'simply because they never know when to leave off. Very few have the strength of mind to husband their capital and bide their time, like a worthy citizen of Strasburg I once met at Baden, who, after three weeks' sojourn in that delightful

paradise, confidentially warned a newly-arrived fellow-townsmen against the dangers of high play, adding that he himself had regularly tried his luck at *roulette* every day, and was already a loser of *fifteen francs*! I remember,' continued the narrator, 'being told by a countryman of mine at Monaco, the most sanguine believer in his lucky star I ever came across, in reply to my inquiry how fortune had treated him, that he had by no means abandoned his original idea of breaking the bank; "for," he said, "although I certainly did pawn my watch yesterday, I have still my studs and sleeve-buttons left!"'

CHARLES HERVEY.

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## THE CONVALESCENT COCKNEY.

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THE air, the air, the open air !  
 Its breath can lull the throb of care.  
 To languor strength, to torment ease,  
 Are wafted on the balmy breeze.  
 With joy I quit my second-floor,  
 And close with glee my outer door.  
 No jot of past or present pain  
 Afflicts me now. I'm out again !

For many a week, from day to day,  
 While prisoned in my sheets I lay,  
 I watched upon my chamber-wall  
 The light and shadow rise or fall.  
 This morn the sovran sun is bright ;  
 No shadow comes to dim its light.  
 The sky is all its own domain.  
 Smile, kingly orb. I'm out again !

How yonder church recalls the time  
 When yonder clock's recurring chime  
 Told how the dreary day drew on,  
 Or when the weary night was gone !

*The Convalescent Cockney.*

Just now it seems a boon so dear  
To *see* the hours as well as *hear*.  
There sounds a welcome in your strain ;  
Ring, merry bells. I'm out again !

And I may rove, no matter where,  
Through busy street or quiet square,  
And greet, for just a little space,  
My fellow-creature face to face.  
I meet him healthy, strong, serene,  
Quite unaware how ill I've been.  
I'll raise my hat (he can't complain),  
' Good-morrow, friend. I'm out again !

The park of saintly James invites  
This errant gaze to calm delights ;  
There cows lactiferously mild  
Give solace to the thirsty child.  
There Phyllis and her Strephon stray,  
And spoon the fleeting hours away.  
Hail, happy nymph and happy swain !  
Keep spooning on. I'm out again !

Nay, let me seek Trafalgar-square,  
And woo the wanton zephyrs there !  
(Undoubtedly 'twere better far  
To call it Plaza Traf-al-gar.)  
Here cherub-like aloft I see  
Horatio Nelson, K.C.B. ;  
Heroic visions fire my brain,  
And stir my pulse. I'm out again !

But stay ! Did Fancy lead me forth  
To ramble south or wander north ?  
I cannot settle which were best,  
A pilgrimage to east or west.  
No matter ; journey where I may,  
It can't be said I've lost a day.  
I'm free as air—I've burst my chain ;  
Hip, hip, hooray ! I'm out again !

HENRY S. LEIGH.